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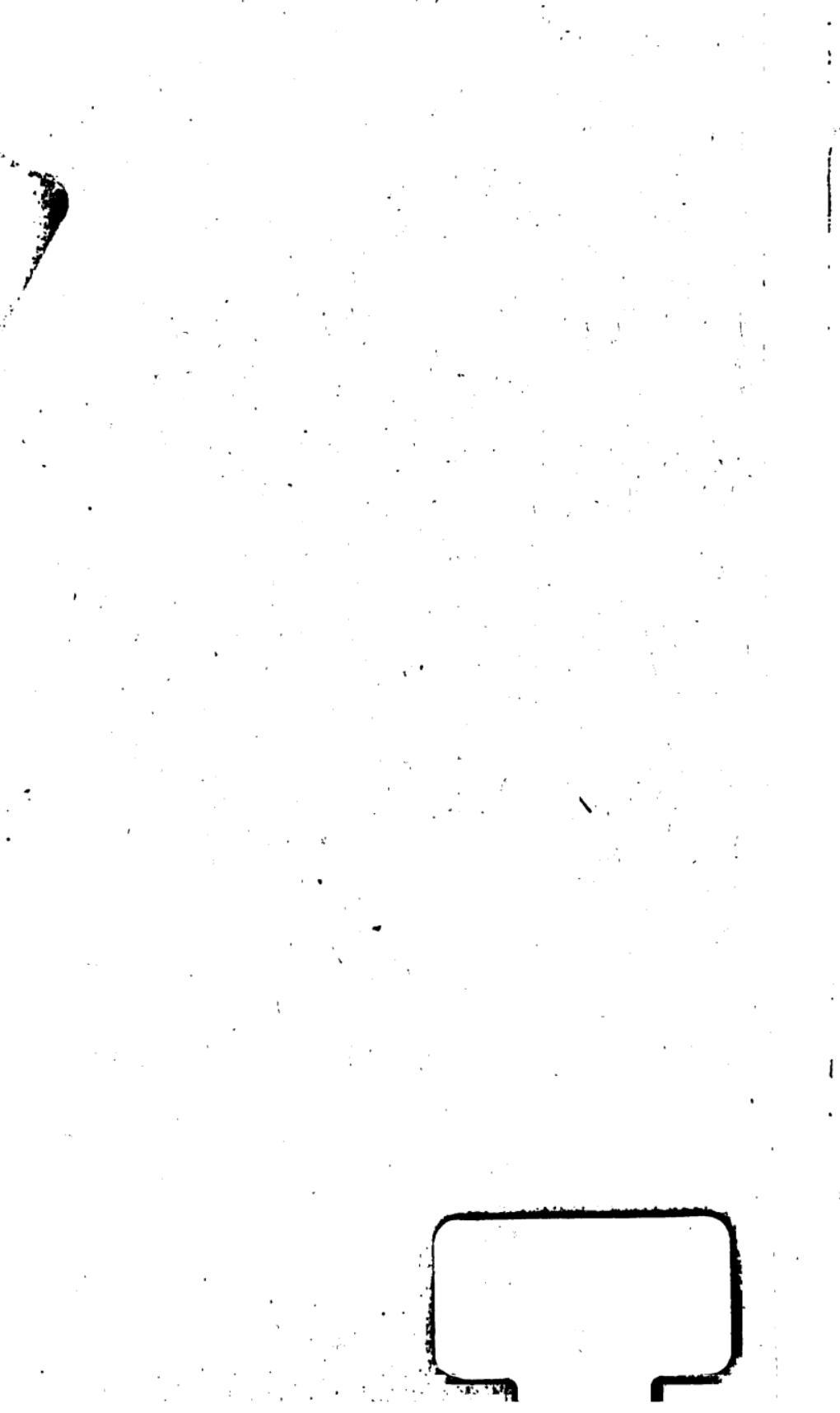
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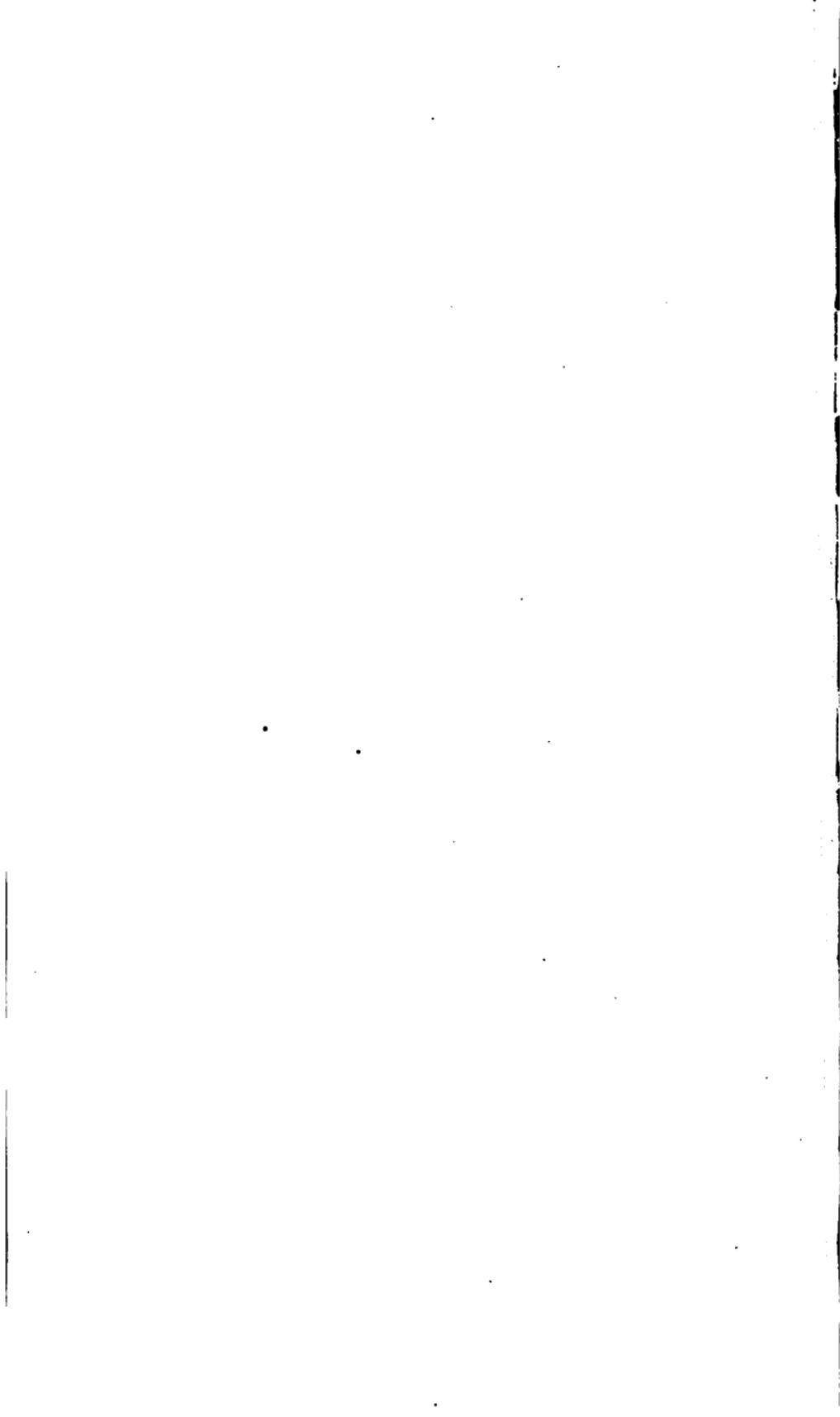
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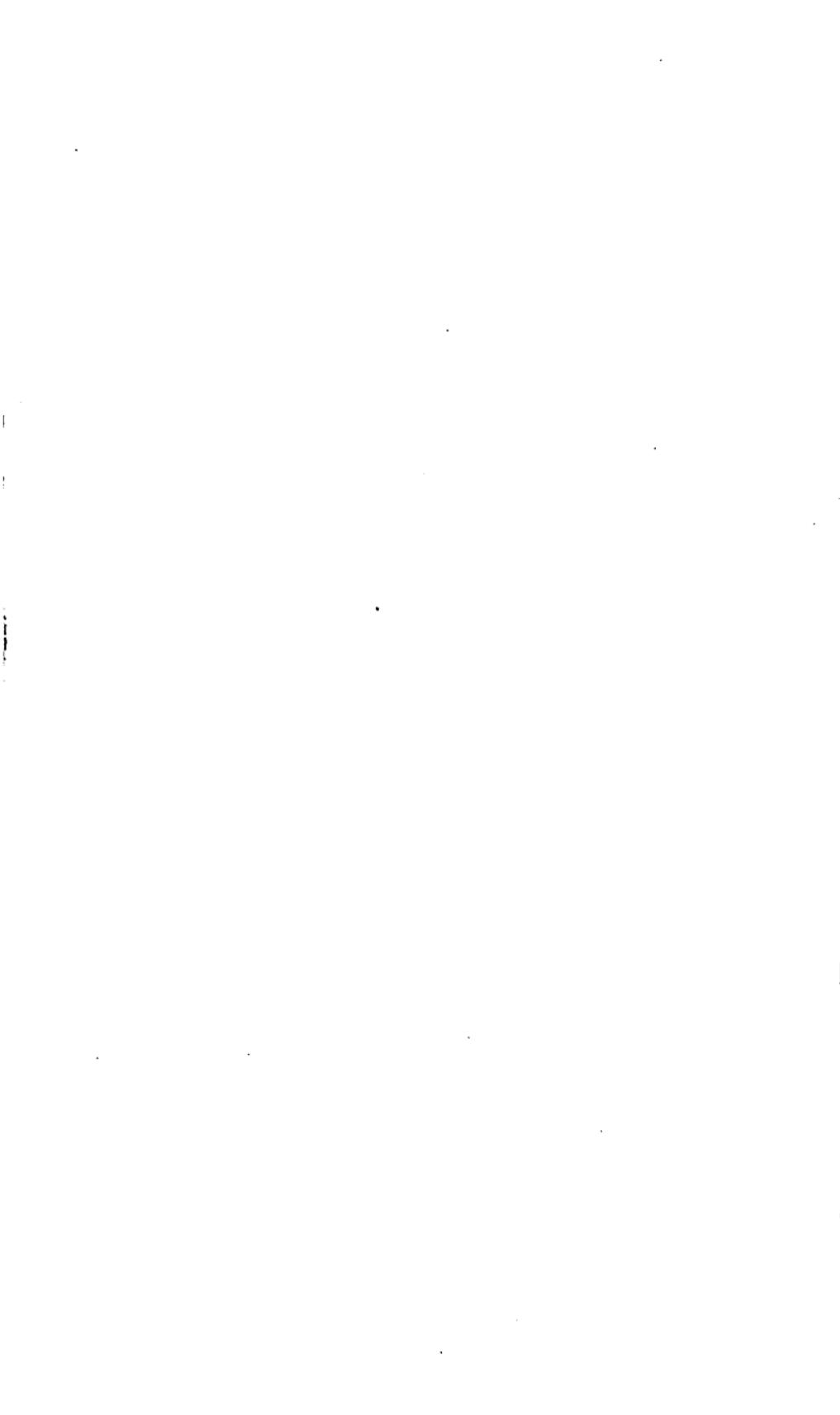


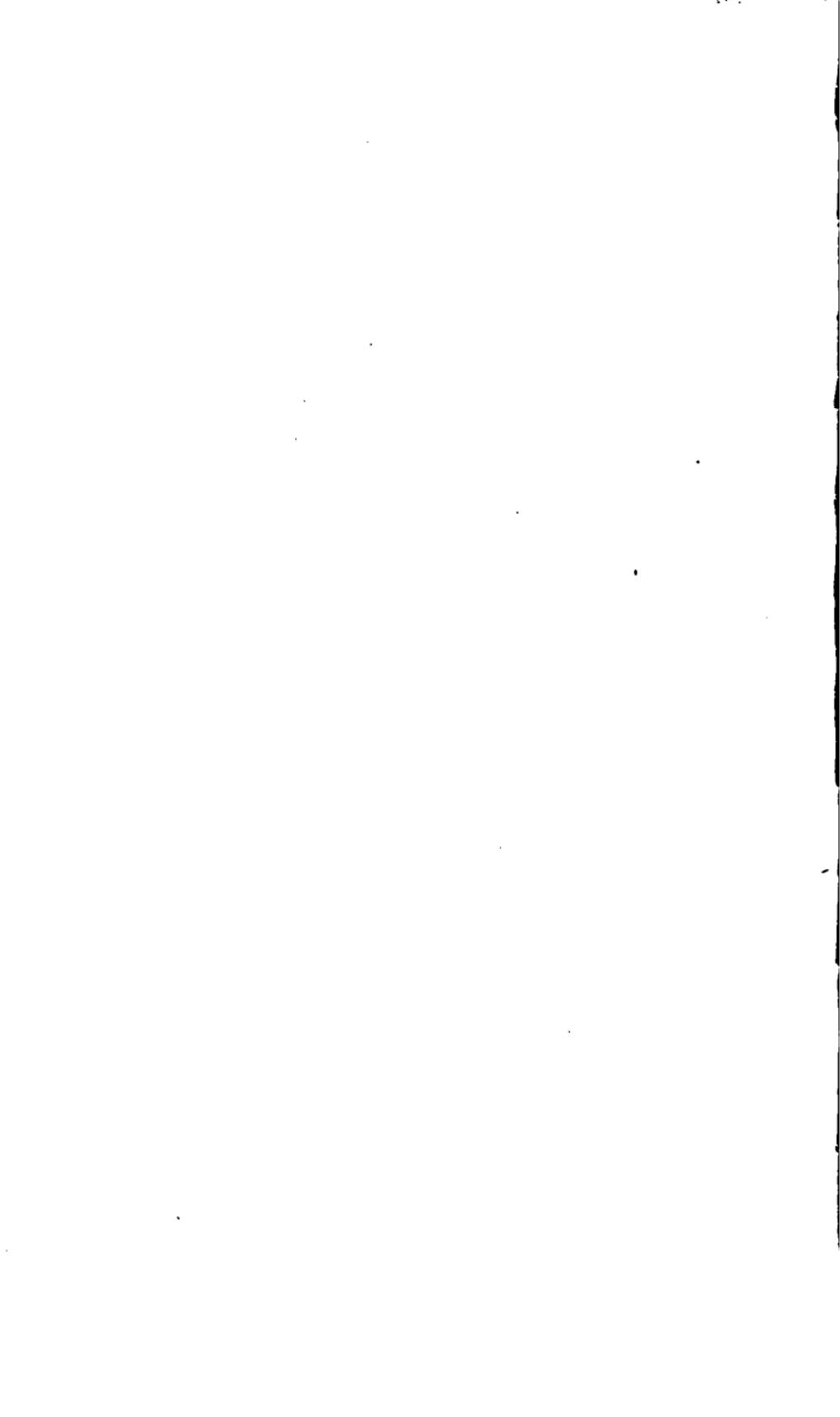
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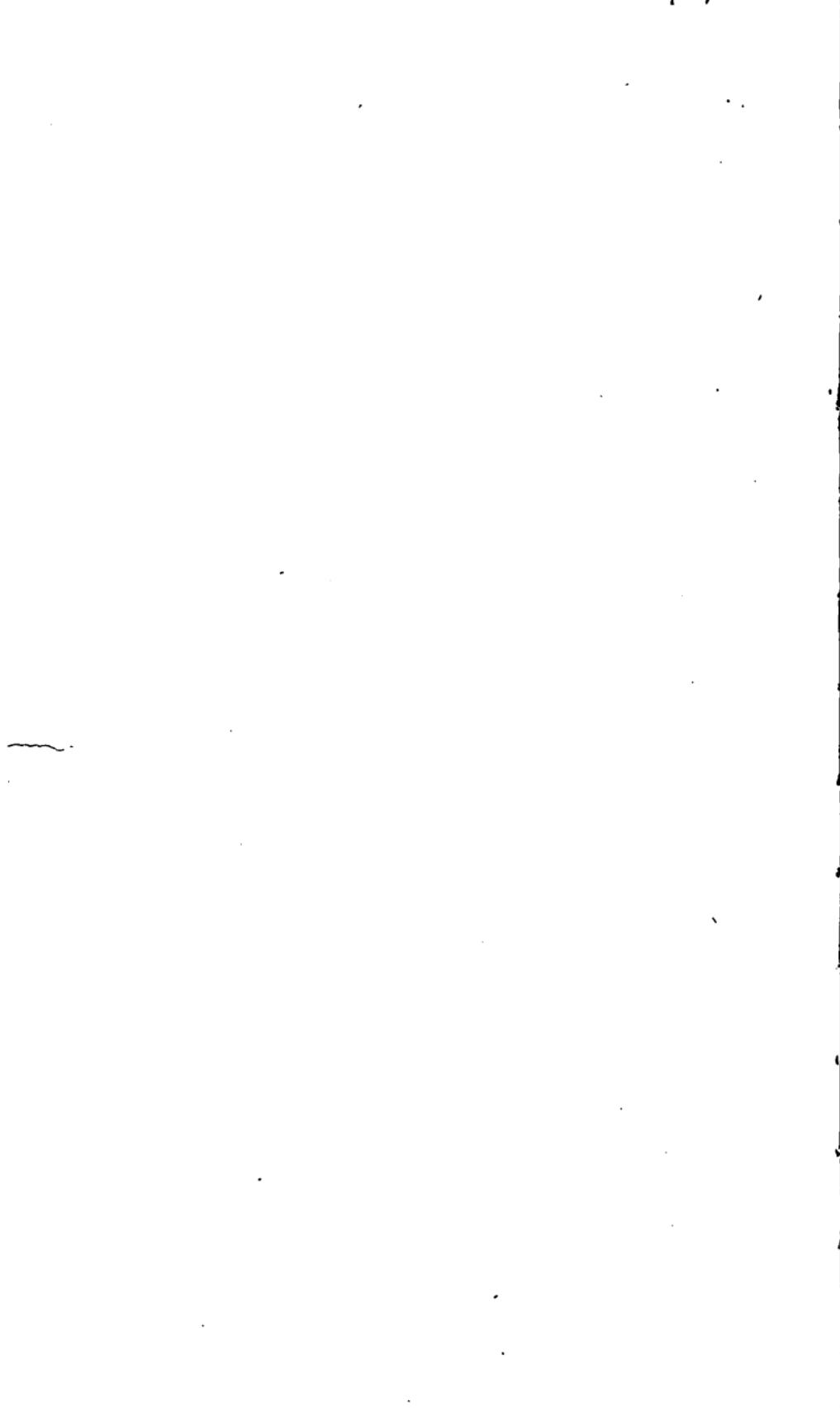


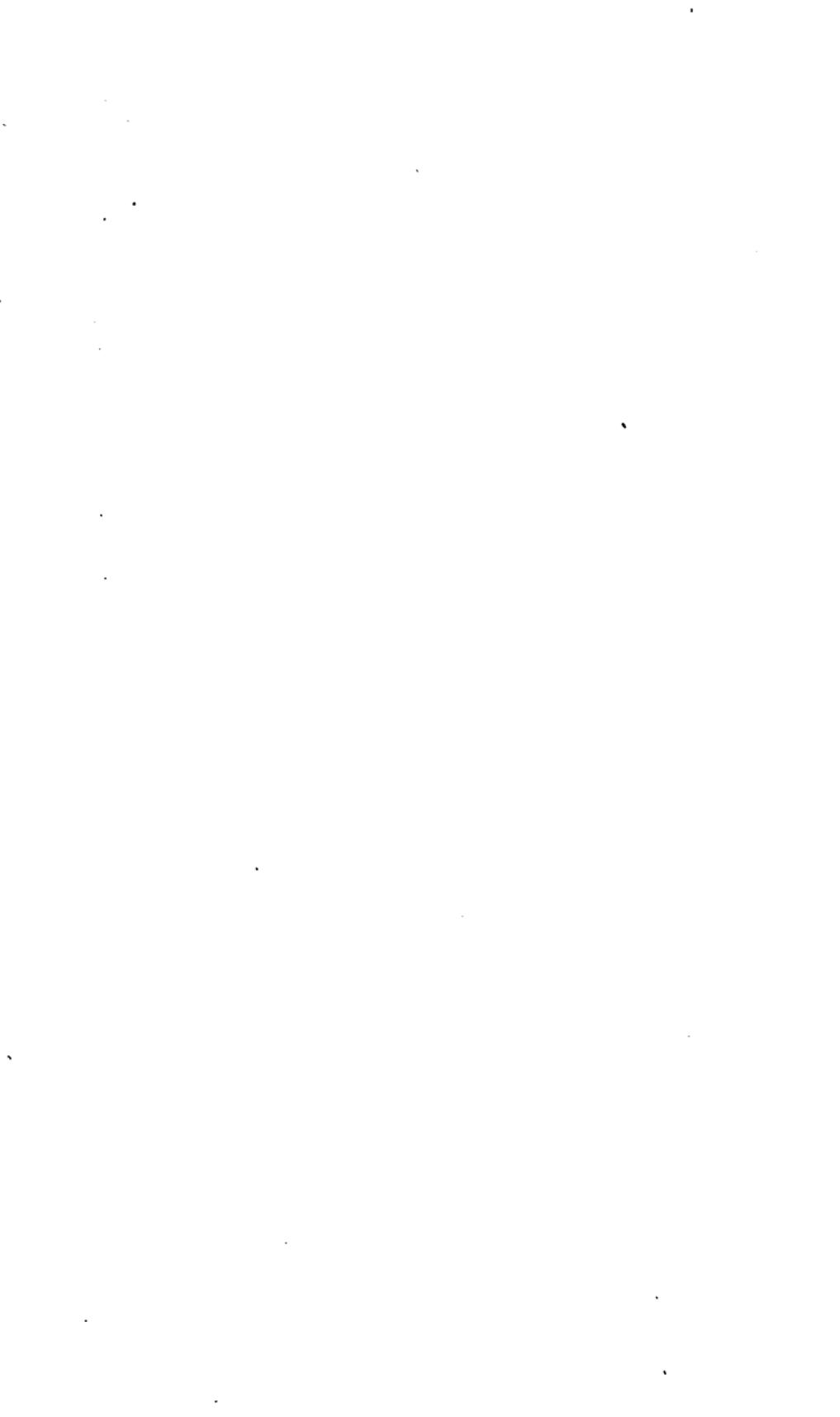


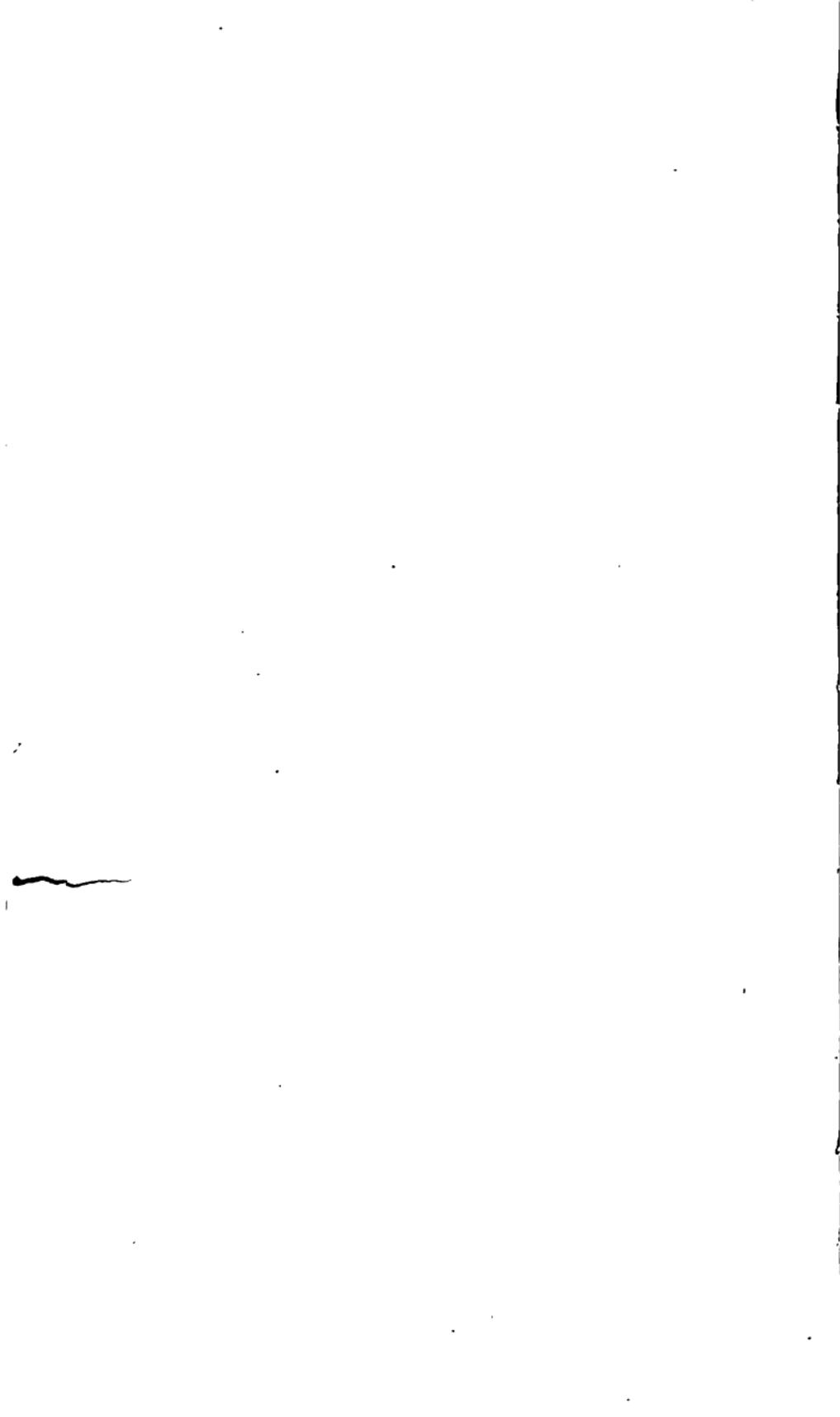
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His Majesty George IIIrd

THE
PERSONAL HISTORY
OF
HIS LATE MAJESTY
GEORGE THE FOURTH:
WITH
ANECDOTES OF DISTINGUISHED PERSONS
OF THE LAST FIFTY YEARS.
BY
THE REV. GEORGE CROLY, LL.D.

Second Edition.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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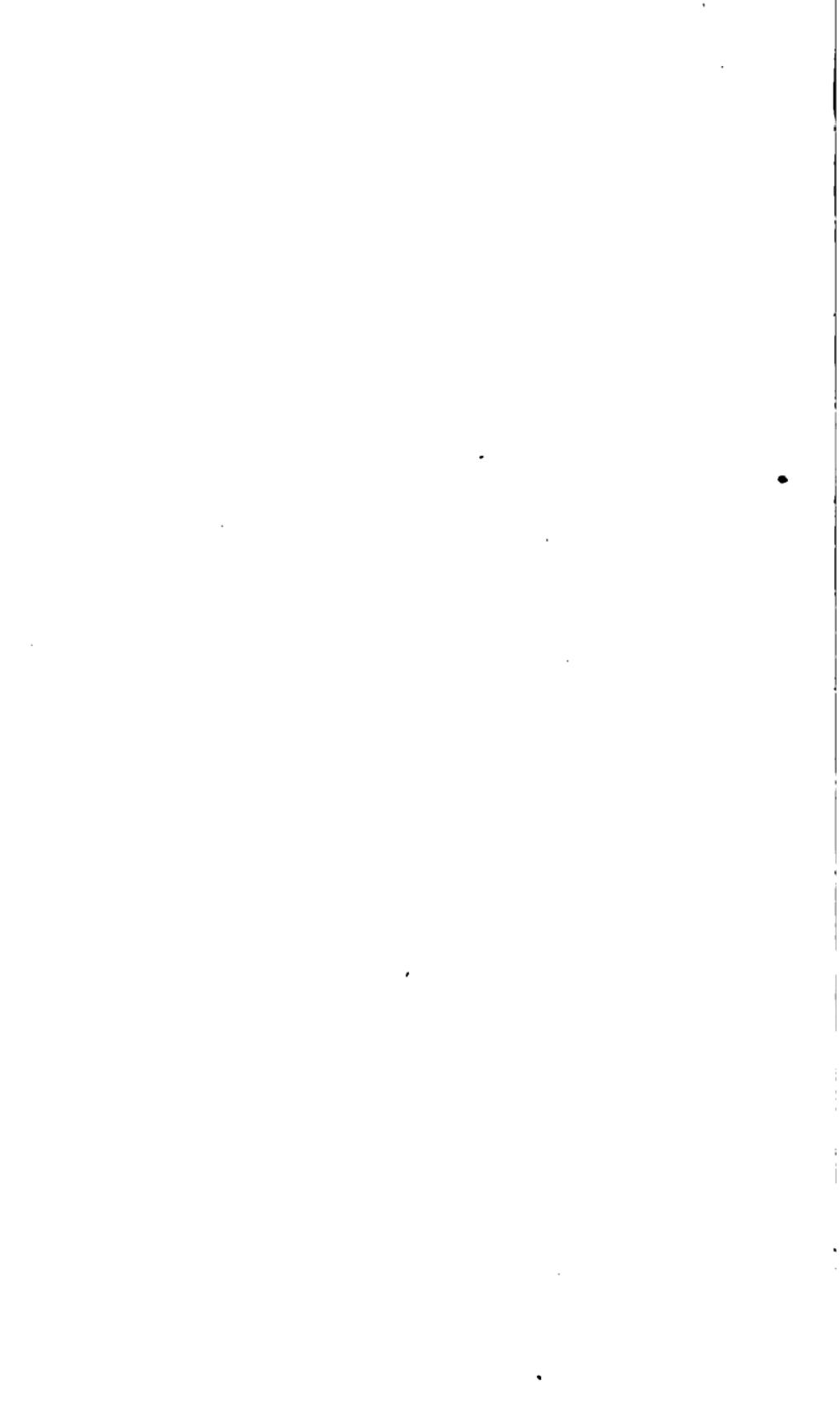
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NOTICE.

AN unusually large edition of these Memoirs having been long since exhausted, it is now republished, with the corrections and additions rendered necessary by time. The public success of the work has amply justified its object ; which was, to tell the truth, and fear no man ; to give the history of party without prejudice, and of the monarch without partiality.



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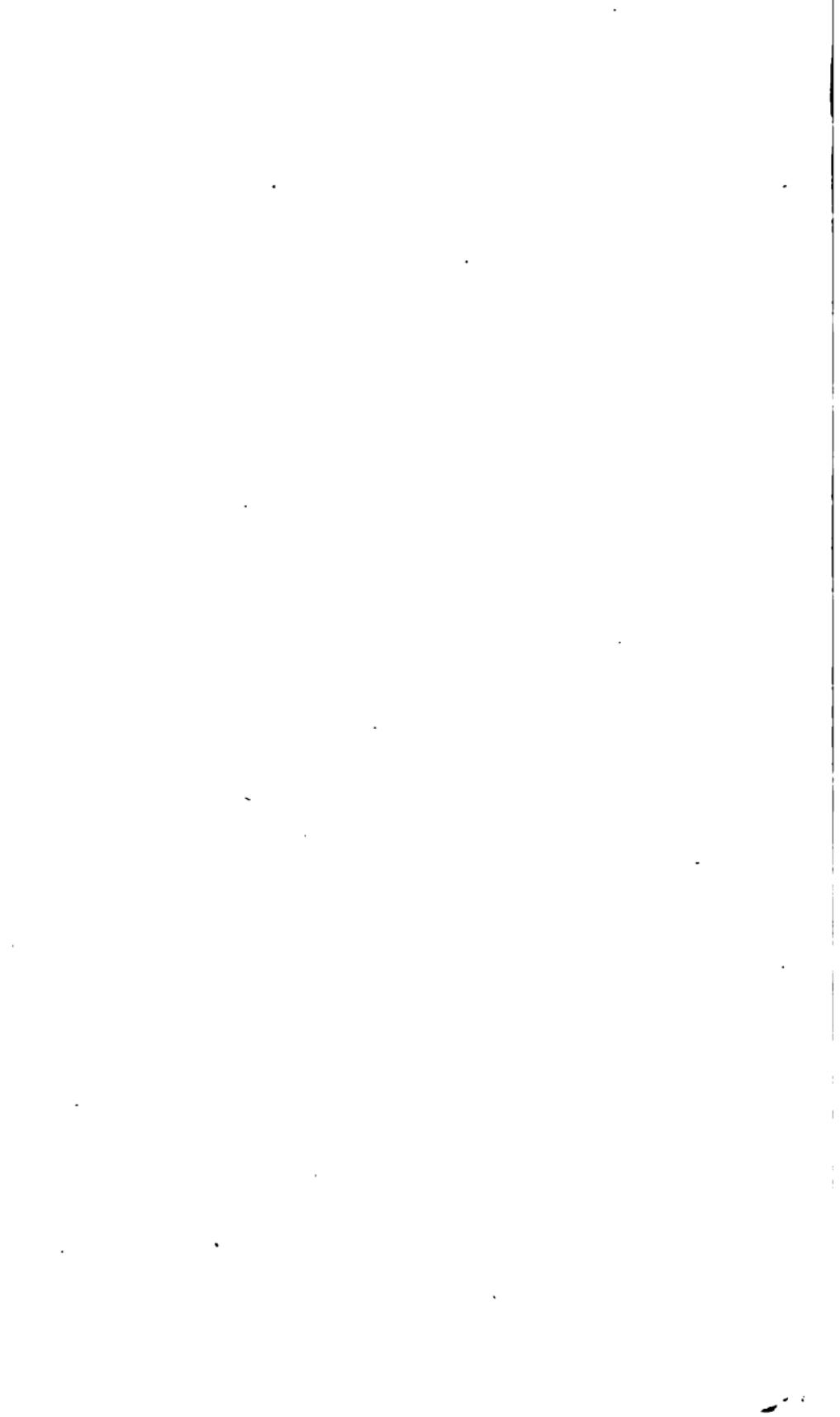
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MEMOIR

OF THE

The writer wishes to correct a mis-statement in page 300 of this volume, relative to the account rendered by the king's farrier. On information since received, it appears that instead of £40,000 his Bill was but 11,000, for thirteen years' service; and that the commissioners passed his accounts with praises of his integrity and the moderate nature of his charges.

German antiquaries to the invasion of the Roman empire under Attila, in the middle of the fifth century. Among the tribes which that almost universal chieftain poured down upon Italy, the Scyrr (Hirri or Heruli) are found; whose king, Eddico, was sent as one of Attila's ambassadors to the court of Theodosius. The native country of the Scyrr was, like that of the principal invaders, in the North of Europe; and they are supposed, on Pliny's authority, to

have possessed the marshes of Swedish Pomerania, and some of the islands near the entrance of the Baltic.

On the sudden death of Attila, and the dismemberment of his conquests, the Scyrri seized upon a large tract bordering on the Danube. But the possession was either too tempting, or too carelessly held, to be disregarded by the fierce chieftains, who, in returning from Italy, had seen the fertility of the land. The Scyrri were involved in a furious war, which seems to have finally spread from the Adriatic to the Euxine. The calamities of Rome were mercilessly revenged by the wounds inflicted in this mutual havoc of her conquerors; and in one of those battles in which extermination or victory were the only alternatives, the tribe of the Pomeranian Scyrri were totally cut off, with Eddico, their king, at their head, and GUELPH, his son, or brother; whose name is then first heard in history.

But the fortunes of the Scyrri were destined to be rapidly revived by one of the most singular and fortunate conquerors of a time remarkable for striking changes of fortune. A remnant

of the tribe, unable or unwilling to follow their king in the Roman invasion, had, by remaining in Pomerania, escaped the general extinction. Odoacer, the son of the fallen king, put himself at their head, and marched from the Baltic to revenge the slaughter of his countrymen. Like many of the northern chieftains, he had been educated, probably as a hostage, in the Roman camps, and had been familiarized with the arts of the accomplished but profligate court of the Western Empire. His address and valour raised him to the command of the German troops in the service of the throne. Some slight which he received from Orestes, his former general, but now father of the emperor; or, more probably, his own lofty and daring ambition, stimulated him to the seizure of a diadem disgraced by the feebleness of its possessor. Sword in hand, he forced Augustulus to abdicate; and, under the name of the Patriarch, Odoacer ascended the throne of the Cæsars.

Power won by the sword is naturally lost by the sword; and Theodoric, the Goth, disputed the sovereignty. After a succession of battles, in

which the military skill of Odoacer earned the praise of history, artifice circumvented the soldier; he was assassinated at a banquet, within ten years of his triumph. His dynasty was extinguished, and his tribe, with his brother Guelph at their head, were driven out, once more to create a kingdom for themselves by their valour. But this expulsion was the true origin of that singular fortune by which the Guelphic blood has been the fount of sovereignty to the most renowned kingdoms of Europe.

Guelph (variously called Anulphus, Wulfoade, and Onulf) saw, with a soldier's eye, the advantage which a position in the Tyrolese hills gave to the possessor, for the purpose of either invasion or defence. Expelling the Roman colonists, he established his kingdom in the mountains, formed alliances with the neighbouring tribes, and, looking down upon Germany on one side, and upon the loveliness and magnificence of Italy on the other, calmly prepared his people for future supremacy.*

* Halliday's Annals of the House of Hanover.

Without following the progress of this distinguished line through the conflicts of the dark ages, and the restless revolutions of power in the Italian sovereignties, we come to the authorized conclusion, that the house of Brunswick have held rank among princes for six hundred years.

From George the First the ascent is clear up to the first Duke of Brunswick and Lunenburg, who received his investiture from the Emperor Frederick the Second in the middle of the thirteenth century. Still, this investiture was less an increase of honours than a shade on the ancient splendour of a family, whose dominions had once numbered Bavaria and Saxony, then of the size of kingdoms; and whose influence was felt from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. But the direct male line of the Brunswick princes is Italian.

The marquesses, or sovereigns, of Este, Liguria, and perhaps of Tuscany, were among its first branches. "In the eleventh century the primitive stem was divided into two. The elder migrated to the banks of the Danube and the Elbe; the younger more humbly adhered to the shores of the Adriatic. The dukes of

Brunswick and the kings of Great Britain are the descendants of the first; the dukes of Ferrara and Modena are the offspring of the second.”*

A singular compact in the sixteenth century added to the celebrity of the house of Brunswick Lunenburg. William, the reigning duke, fourth son of Ernest, who had obtained for himself a title more illustrious than that of thrones, the **CONFESSOR**, by his bold support of the Protestant Confession of Augsburg, had left fifteen children, seven of whom were sons. The young princes, on the death of their father in 1593, resolved, for the purpose of keeping up their house in undiminished dignity, that but one of them should marry; the marriage to be decided by lot, and the elder brother to have the undivided inheritance, and be succeeded by the next survivor. The lot was drawn by the sixth brother, George, who married Anne Eleanora, daughter of the Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt, by whom he had five children. The compact was solemnly kept by the brothers, and attracted

* Gibbon’s Posthumous Works.

so much notice by its romantic fidelity, that the Sultan, Achmet the First, pronounced it "worth a man's while to take a journey through Europe to be an eye-witness of such wonderful brotherly affection and princely honour."

The accession of George the Third to the throne of these realms was welcomed by the whole British empire. The difficulties which had thwarted the popularity of his two immediate predecessors were past—the party of the exiled dynasty had been wasted away by time, or alienated by the proverbial selfishness and personal folly of the Stuarts; a war had just closed, in which all the recollections of England were of triumphs and territories won from the habitual disturber of Europe; commerce was rising from the clouds always thrown round it by war, and rising with a strength and splendour unseen before, shooting over the farthest regions of the world those beams which are at once light and life, brightening and developing regions scarcely known by name, and filling their bosom with the rich and vigorous fertility of European arts, comforts, and knowledge.

All the acts of the young king strengthened the national good-will. His speech from the throne was deservedly applauded, as the dictate of a manly and generous heart; and this characteristic was made a wise topic of congratulation in the corresponding addresses of the people. “It is our peculiar happiness,” said the London Address, “that your Majesty’s heart is truly *English*; and that you have discovered in your earliest years the warmest affection to the laws and constitution of these kingdoms.”

An expression in the king’s address to the privy council was seized on with peculiar avidity, as a proof alike of his head and heart. “I depend,” said he, “on the support of every *honest man*”—a sentiment which united republican simplicity with kingly honour. He prohibited the too courtly style then customary in the pulpit to the sovereign, reprimanding one of his chaplains in the expressive words,—“That he came to church to hear the praises of God, and not his own.” The independence of the judges was among his first objects. And on the dissolution of parliament he consummated the na-

tional homage, by forbidding all ministerial interference in the elections, and magnanimously declaring that “he would be tried by his country.”

The royal marriage next became a consideration of public importance. A bride was sought among the immediate connexions of the royal family, and the Princess Dowager proposed Sophia Charlotte, daughter of the Duke of Mecklenburg Strelitz. Lord Harcourt was made the bearer of the proposal, which was unhesitatingly accepted. The future queen arrived at St. James's on the 8th of September, 1761. At nine on the same evening, with the formal rapidity of court marriages, she was wedded; and from that time, through half a century, became an object of interest and respect to the British nation.

It was one of the striking features of the Hanover line, that it, for the first time, united the blood of the four races of kings,—the British, the Cambro-British, the Scottish, and the English; deducing the succession from Cadwaldr, last king of the Britons, through the seventeen princes of Wales, to Guledys Ddu,

sister and heiress of Dafydd, married to Ralph Mortimer, and thence through

19. Roger, their son.
20. Edmund Mortimer, his son.
21. Roger, son of Edmund, first Earl of March.
22. Edmond, son of Roger, married to Philippa, daughter and heiress of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, third son of Edward the Third.
23. Roger, their son.
24. Anne, daughter and heiress of Roger, married to Richard of Conisburg, Earl of Cambridge.
25. Richard, Duke of York, their son.
26. Edward the Fourth, eldest son of Richard.
27. Elizabeth, Edward's eldest sister, married to Henry the Seventh.
28. Margaret, their eldest daughter, married to James the Fourth of Scotland.
29. James the Fifth of Scotland, their son.
30. Mary, Queen of Scots, daughter of James.
31. James the First of England, son of Mary, by Lord Darnley.

32. Elizabeth, daughter of James, married to Frederick, Elector Palatine.
33. Sophia, their daughter, married to Ernest Augustus, Elector of Hanover.
34. George the First, their son.
35. George the Second, his son.
36. Frederick, Prince of Wales, son of George the Second.
37. George the Third, his son.*

* "Yorke's Royal Tribes." Those who desire to search deeper into the antiquities of the Hanoverian line, may examine "Eccard's *Origines Guelficæ*," with "Muratori's *Antichita Estense*," for the Italian branch; and Sir Andrew Halliday's "Annals of the House of Hanover," for a detail of the various possessions and alliances of the northern.

CHAPTER II.

BIRTH OF THE PRINCE.

ON the 12th of August, 1762, the birth of the heir-apparent was announced; her Royal Highness the Princess Dowager of Wales, the ladies of her majesty's bedchamber, and the chief lords of the privy council, being in attendance.

On this occasion, the king's popularity, independently of the high interests connected with the royal succession, excited the most universal public feeling. As the time of the queen's accouchement drew nigh, the national anxiety had increased. It was raised to its height by the intelligence, on the evening of the 11th, that her majesty's illness was immediately at hand. The great officers of state were now ordered to await the summons in the neighbourhood of the royal bedchamber; a precaution which sounds

strangely to our ears, but which has been considered a matter of propriety, since the imputations thrown on the birth of the son of James the Second.

The palace was crowded during the night. At four in the morning the Princess Dowager of Wales arrived. The queen had been taken slightly ill some time before. The officers of state were in attendance in the ante-room of the royal chamber from five; and at twenty-four minutes past seven the joyful news was spread through the palace, that an heir was born to the throne. The sound was caught with enthusiasm by the people, who had thronged the avenues of St. James's from daybreak, was instantly conveyed through London, and was hailed by all, as an event which accomplished the singular public prosperity of the new reign.

On those occasions popular feeling delights in seizing on every fortunate coincidence. The day was deemed auspicious, as the anniversary of the Hanover succession. But a more direct popular triumph occurred, while the king was yet receiving the congratulations of the nobility.

Of all wars, in those times, the most popular

was a Spanish war; and of all prizes, the most magnificent was a Spanish galleon. The *Hermione*, one of the treasure ships sailing from Lima, had been taken in May, off Cape St. Vincent, by three English frigates. Rumour exaggerated the wealth on board to the enormous sum of twelve millions sterling in silver, besides the usual precious merchandise from the Spanish settlements. But the actual treasure was immense; the officers made fortunes, and even the share of a common sailor, though three crews were to divide the capture, was computed at nearly one thousand pounds. The chief cargo was silver, but many bags of gold were found hidden in the dollar chests, probably to evade the impost at Cadiz; which largely increased the value to the fortunate captors.

The wagons conveying the treasure had arrived in London on the night before, and were on this morning to have passed before the palace in their way to the Tower. Almost at the moment of announcing the royal birth, the cavalcade was seen entering St. James's Street, escorted by cavalry and infantry with trumpets sounding, the enemy's flags waving over the

wagons, and the whole surrounded by the multitude that such an event would naturally collect. The sudden spectacle led the king and the nobility to the palace windows. The news of the prince's birth now spread like flame; and innumerable voices rose to wish the young heir prosperity. A Roman would have predicted, that an existence begun under such omens must close without a cloud. The king, in the flower of youth, and with the exultation of a sovereign, and the still deeper delight of a father, was conspicuous in exhibiting his sense of the public congratulation; and the whole scene was long spoken of as one of the most natural and animated exhibitions of national joy.

George the Third had commenced his sovereignty with a manly and generous declaration of his pride in "being born a Briton,"—a declaration in which he had the more merit, from its not merely being his own, but from its being made in defiance of the cold-blooded statesmanship which objected to it in the privy council, as a reflection on the Hanoverian birth of the two former kings. The result shewed the superior wisdom of a warm heart to an official

head; for this single sentence superseded, in the public memory, every other syllable of the royal speech, and became instantly the watch-word of national affection to the throne.

The king followed the principle into the details of life. He loved to be a “thorough Englishman.” Like every man of sense, he scorned all affectation; and, above all, scorned the affectation of foreign manners. The lisping effeminacy, the melancholy jargon, the French and German foppery, of the moustached and cigared race which the coffee-house life of the continent has propagated among us, would have found no favour in the eyes of this honest and high-principled king. Honour to God and justice to man, public respect for religion and private guidance by its spirit, public decorum and personal virtue, a lofty and sincere zeal for the dignity of his crown and people, and a vigilant yet affectionate discipline in his family and household, were the characteristics of George the Third. Even in his royalty he loved to revive the simple habits of English domestic life: and his famous speech from the throne scarcely gave more assurance of an English heart, than the homely

announcement, which followed in a few days after the queen's recovery, that the royal infant was to be shewn in its cradle to all who called at the palace ; and that their majesties invited the visitors to take refreshments, after the old custom of the country.

On the 17th of August, a few days after his birth, the royal infant had been created Prince of Wales by patent, in addition to that weight of honours which devolves on the heir of the British and Hanoverian sovereignties. The title of Prince of Wales was one of the trophies of the conquest of Llewellyn, and was originally conferred by the first Edward upon his son in 1284, investing him by cap, coronet, verge, and ring. The title is exclusively devoted to the *eldest* son of the throne, except where it has been engrossed by the throne itself.

The eldest son is also, as inheriting from the Scottish kings, hereditary steward of Scotland, Duke of Rothesay, Earl of Carrick, and Baron of Renfrew ; titles conferred by Robert the Third, King of Scotland, on his eldest son, in 1399 ; and appropriated for ever to the princes of Scotland from their birth.

The heir-apparent is also born Duke of Cornwall, and possessor of the revenues of the duchy. But it is singular that he is not possessed of any Irish title; while all the junior branches of the royal family enjoy honours from Ireland.

Addresses rapidly flowed in from the leading public bodies. That of the city seems to have embodied the substance of the chief popular testimonials. After congratulating his majesty on the event, it alluded to the Hanover succession. “ So important an event, and upon a day ever sacred to liberty, fills us with the most grateful sentiments to the Divine Goodness, which has thus early crowned your majesty’s domestic happiness, and opened to your people the agreeable prospect of permanence and stability to the blessings which they derive from the wisdom and steadiness of your majesty’s victorious reign.” This was courteous. But the addresses of the clergy were observed to be generally in a higher tone; and the address of the clergy of the province of Canterbury was distinguished by a direct appeal to those great doctrines on which the constitution stands. The king’s answer was sincere, and suitable to the

free king of a free people. “ He saw with peculiar pleasure their gratitude to Heaven for the birth of a Protestant heir. Their confidence in his fixed intention to educate the prince in every principle of civil and religious liberty was truly acceptable to him ; and he desired them to rely upon him for observing his pledges to the empire, and for leaving nothing undone that could promote the sacred interests of Christian piety and moral virtue, and transmit to posterity our most happy constitution.”

The fickleness of popularity is the oldest lesson of public life : yet the sudden ebb of this tide of public feeling towards George the Third is among its most remarkable and unaccountable examples. No European throne had been ascended for the last hundred years by a sovereign more qualified by nature and circumstances to win “ golden opinions ” from his empire. Youth, striking appearance, a fondness not less for the gay and graceful amusements of court life than for those field sports which make the popular indulgence of the English land-holder, a strong sense of the national value of scientific and literary pursuits, piety unques-

tionably pure, and morals on which even satire never dared to throw a stain, were the original claims of the king to the approbation of his people. In all those points also, the contrast of the new reign with those of the two preceding monarchs was signally in its favour.

Horace Walpole, a man rendered caustic by a sense of political failure, and whose pen delighted to fling sarcasm on all times and all men, for once forgets his nature, and gives way to panegyric, in speaking of the young king. “The new reign begins with great propriety and decency. There is great dignity and grace in the king’s manner. I don’t say this, like my dear Madame de Sevigné, because he was civil to *me*; but the part is well acted. The young king has all the appearance of being amiable. There is great grace to temper much dignity, and a good nature which breaks out upon all occasions.”

It was the choice of Lord Bute as his prime minister which tarnished all the king’s qualities in the general eye. Insinuations that this handsome nobleman owed his rank at once to the passion of the princess dowager, and to arbitrary

principles in the king,—insinuations never substantiated,—were enough to influence that multitude who take their opinions from the loudest clamourer. Wilkes, a man broken in fortune, and still more broken in character, hopeless of returning to the ranks of honourable life, and both too notorious and too intemperate to be fit for anything but faction, was buoyed up into a bastard influence by inflaming the national jealousy against Scotland.*

But Lord Bute soon ceased to be the object. A nobler quarry was found in the king; the “eagle towering in his pride of place, was by the mousing owl hawked at;” faction lived on royal calumny; the king’s intentions were vilified, his personal qualities turned into caricature, and his authority was suddenly obscured, if his life was not endangered, by the arts of demagogues, scandalous and criminal in every mode by which individuals can earn exclusion from society.

* “No petticoat government—no Scotch minister—and no Lord George Sackville,” were the watchwords of the time, placarded on the walls, and echoed by the mob: the three combining all the grievances of a party, afflicted by that most angry of all distempers—the desire to get into place.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRINCE'S EDUCATION.

PRINCES soon become public personages ; and it cannot be denied that his royal highness displayed himself at a sufficiently early age ; for in 1765 he received a deputation from the Society of Ancient Britons, on St. David's day. His answer to their address was certainly not too long, for it was simply—"He thanked them for this mark of duty to the king, and wished prosperity to the charity." Yet probably an earlier speech has been seldom made ; for the speaker was not quite three years old. But it was not lost on the courtiers. They declared it to have been delivered with the happiest grace of manner and action ; and that the features of future greatness were never more palpable. In Decem-

ber of the same year he was invested with the order of the garter.

In 1771 the prince had reached a period when it became necessary to commence his education. Lord Holderness, a nobleman of considerable attainments, but chiefly recommended by his knowledge of the court, was appointed governor: Dr. Markham and Cyril Jackson were the preceptor and sub-preceptor.

Markham had attracted the royal notice by his celebrity as a schoolmaster. At the age of thirty he had soared to the height of professional glory; for he was placed at the head of Westminster School, where he taught for fourteen years. The masters of the leading schools are generally cheered by some church dignity, and Markham received the deanery of Christ Church: from this he had been transferred to Chester; and it was while he was in possession of this bishopric that he was selected for the preceptorship of the Prince of Wales.

But this private plan of education was severely criticised. It was pronounced to be a secluded, selfish, and obsolete scheme for court thraldom, fitter to make the future sovereign a bigot or a

despot, than the accomplished and high-spirited leader of a British people.

The old controversy on the rival merits of public and private education was now revived: and, to do the controversialists justice, with less of the spirit of rational inquiry than of angry and prejudiced partisanship.

The great schools were panegyrised as breeding a noble equality among the sons of the various ranks of society; as inspiring those feelings of independence which in after-life make the man lift up his fearless front in the presence of his superiors in all but knowledge and virtue; and as pre-eminently training the youth of the land to that personal resolution, mental resource, and intellectual dignity, which are essential to every honourable career; and are congenial, above all, to the free spirit and bold habits of England.

All those advantages must be conceded, though sometimes burlesqued by fantastic and vulgar speculation, by notions of extraordinary facilities furnished to the man by the companions of the boy; of the road to fortune smoothed, the ladder to eminence miraculously placed in his grasp, the

coronet, the mitre, and the highest and most sparkling honours of statesmanship, held forth to the aspirant by the hand of early friendship,—hopes, in their conception mean, in their nature infinitely fallacious, and in their anticipation altogether opposed to the openness and self-respect which it is the first duty of those schools to create in the young mind. Yet the question has its darker side. The moralist may well tremble at that contamination of morals which so often defies the vigilance of the tutor; the man of limited income is entitled to reprobate the habits of extravagance engendered in the great schools; and the parent who values the affections of his children may justly dread the sullen and heartless disdain of parental authority which so often springs up at a distance from the paternal eye. But no answer has been found for the palpable fact, that without public education a large portion of the youth of England would receive no education whatever; while some of the more influential would receive, in the feeble indulgences of opulent parentage and the adulation of domestics, an education worse than none. Thus, the advantages belong to the public

system, and to no other ; while the disadvantages are accidental, and require nothing for their remedy beyond increased activity in the governors, and a more exact vigilance in the nation.

But of the education of a British prince there can be no question. It ought to be in its whole spirit public. Under all circumstances, the heir to a throne will find flatterers ; but at Eton, or Westminster, the flattery must often be signally qualified ; and his noble nature will not be the less noble for the home truths which no homage can always restrain among the rapid passions and fearless tongues of boys. The chance of his falling into the snares of early favouritism has been objected. Yet nothing could be more trivial. School fondnesses are easily forgotten. But, if adversity be the true teacher of princes, even the secure heir to the luxurious throne of England might not be the worse for that semblance of adversity which is to be found in the straight-forward speech and bold competitorship of a great English school.

Under Lord Holderness and the preceptors, the usual routine of classical teaching was care-

fully inculcated, for Markham and Jackson were practised masters of that routine ; and the prince often afterwards, with the gratitude peculiarly graceful in his rank, professed his remembrance of their services. But, though the classics might flourish in the princely establishment, it soon became obvious that peace did not flourish along with them. Rumours of discontent, royal, princely, and preceptorial, rapidly escaped even the close confines of the palace ; and at length the public, less surprised than perplexed, heard the formal announcement, that the whole preceptorship of his royal highness had sent in their resignations.

Those disturbances were the first, and the inevitable, results of the system. Lord Holdernessee obscurely complained, that attempts were made to obtain an illegitimate influence over the prince's mind. Public rumour was active, as at all times, in throwing light on what the courtly caution of the noble governor would have covered with shade. The foreign politics of the former reigns, the Scotch premier, and the German blood of the queen, were easy topics for the multitude ; and it was loudly asserted, that the great object of the intrigue was, to supersede the

prince's British principles by the despotic doctrines of the house of Hanover.

Similar charges had occurred in the early life of George the Third. That prince's governors were accused of the contradictory crimes of infecting his mind with arbitrary principles, and with a contempt for the royal authority; with an excessive deference to the princess his mother, in opposition to the due respect for the sovereign; and with a humiliating subserviency to the will of the sovereign, in neglect of the natural affection for his mother. Preceptors had been successively dismissed; committees of inquiry held upon their conduct; books of hazardous political tendency,—Father Orleans' *Revolutions of the House of Stuart*, Ramsay's *Travels of Cyrus*, Sir Robert Filmer's Works, and Père Perefixe's *History of Henry the Fourth*, had been denounced as the prince's peculiar studies; and the whole scene of confusion had ended, as might be expected, in the still greater misfortune of Lord Bute's appointment to the governorship—an appointment which gave a form and colour to all the popular discontents, alarmed the public friends of the constitution,

furnished an unfailing fount at which every national disturber long replenished his eloquence, and for many after years enfeebled the attachment of the empire to a king whose first object was the good of his people.

A new establishment of tutors was now to be formed for the Prince of Wales. It bore striking evidence of haste; for Lord Bruce, who was placed at its head, resigned within a few days. Some ridicule was thrown on this rapid secession, by the story, that the young prince had thought proper to inquire into his lordship's attainments, and finding that the pupil knew more of classics than the master, had exhibited the very reverse of courtiership on the occasion. Lord Bruce was succeeded by the Duke of Montague, with Hurd, Bishop of Lichfield, and Arnald, as preceptor and sub-preceptor.

This choice of teachers was, at least, harmless. Hurd was a man of feeble character, but of scholarship sufficient for the purpose. He had contributed little to his profession but some "Sermons," long since passed away; and nothing to general literature but some "Letters on Chivalry," equally superseded by the manlier disquisition

of our time. It had been his fortune to meet in early life with Warburton, and to be borne up into publicity by the strength of that forcible, but unruly and paradoxical mind. But Hurd had neither inclination nor power for the region of the storms. When Warburton died, his wing drooped, and he rapidly sank into the literary indolence which, to a man of talents, is a dereliction of his public duty ; but to a man stimulated against his nature into fame, is policy, if not wisdom.

Arnald was the prince's tutor in science. He had been senior wrangler at Cambridge, an honour which he had torn from Law, the friend of Paley, and brother of the Chief Justice Lord Ellenborough. It is a curious instance of the impression which early incidents can leave, to find the defeated student making a topic of his college overthrow to the last hour of his being. Not even Law's elevation to the opulent Irish bishopric of Elphin could make him forget or forgive the evil done at Cambridge to his budding celebrity. To the last, he complained that the laurel had not fallen on the right head, that some unaccountable partiality had suddenly

veiled the majestic justice of Alma Mater, and that he must perish without adding the solid glories of the wranglership to the airy enjoyments of the peerage and ten thousand pounds a year.

Lord North's spirit was peace; though plunged in perpetual quarrel at home and abroad, in the palace, in parliament, with the people, with the old world, and with the new. On this occasion, he softened the irritation of the exiled governors and tutors by lavish preferment. The Marquess of Carmarthen, married to Lord Holderness's daughter, obtained the appointment, valuable to his habits, of Lord of the Bedchamber; Markham was made Archbishop of York; and Cyril Jackson received the rich preferment of the deanery of Christ Church. Even Lord Bruce's classical pangs were balméd by the Earldom of Aylesbury, an old object of his ambition.

The name of Cyril Jackson still floats among college remembrances. He was Dean of Christ Church during twenty-six years, and fulfilled the duties of his station with honour, as a man of accomplishment and virtue. During

this period he refused the Irish primacy—a refusal which was idly blazoned at the time as an act of more than Roman virtue. But heroic self-denial is rare among men; and Jackson had obvious reasons for declining the distinction.—His income was large, his labour light, and his time of life too far advanced to make change either easy or dignified.

Preferment in Ireland, too, is seldom a strong temptation to the opulent part of the English clergy. Its remoteness from all their customary associations, and the perplexity of mingling among a new people, with new habits, and those not seldom hostile to the churchman, naturally repel the man of advanced life. The probability of being speedily forgotten by the great distributors of ecclesiastical patronage makes Irish preferment equally obnoxious to the younger clergy who have any hopes at home. Swift's correspondence is a continual complaint of the misfortune of having the Channel between him and the life he loved: and his language has been echoed by almost every ecclesiastic who has suffered his English interest to be expended in Irish promotion.

A few passing words may be given to so distinguished a name. If Swift at length abandoned his complaints, it was only for revenge. He cured his personal querulousness by turning it into national disaffection. Gifted with extraordinary powers of inflaming the popular mind, he resolved to shew the British government the error which they had committed in sending him into what, to the last hour of his life, he called “his banishment.” In the wild recollections of Ireland, then doubly furious with defeat, Swift found the congenial armoury for the full triumph of embittered genius. His sense of ministerial insult was expanded into hatred to the English name. Despairing of court favour, his daring and unprincipled spirit made occupation for itself in mob patriotism. Swift's was the true principle for a great demagogue. From the time of his first drawing the sword he shewed no wavering, no inclination to sheathe it, no faint-hearted tendency to make terms with the enemy. He shook off the dust of his feet against the gates of England; and once excluded, never deigned to approach them again, but to call down the

fires of popular hatred upon their battlements. Even at this distance of time, and with the deepest condemnation of Swift's abuse of his talents, it is difficult to look upon him without the reluctant admiration given to inflexible and inexorable resolve, let the cause be what it may. If revenge was his enjoyment, of that feast no man ever supped more largely. For good or evil, he stood completely between the government and the nation. The shadow of this insolent and daring dictator extinguished the light of every measure of British benevolence, or transmitted it to the people distorted, and in colours of tyranny and blood. Or, if popular idolatry could repay a human heart for this perpetual paroxysm of revenge, no idol ever enjoyed a thicker cloud of popular incense. *He* was the virtual viceroy, in whose presence the English representative of the monarch dwindled down into a cipher. And this extraordinary superiority was not a mere caprice of public opinion. Among a people memorable for the giddiness of their public attachments, his popularity continued unshaken through life. To the last, he enjoyed his criminal indulgence in

thwarting the British government; exulted in filling with his own gall the bosoms of the generous, yet rash and inflammable, race, whom, in the midst of his panegyrics, he scorned; libelled the throne, while he bore the sentence of court exile as the keenest suffering of his nature; solaced his last interval of reason by an epitaph, which was a libel on the human species; and died, compensating his imaginary wrongs by bequeathing to the people a fierce and still unexpired inheritance of hatred against the laws, the institutions, and the name of England.

Jackson, in 1809, finding age coming heavy upon him, resigned his deanery, at sixty-four, and then had the merit, which deserves to be acknowledged, of feeling that there is a time for all things, and that man should interpose some space between public life and the grave. Refusing a bishopric, offered to him by his former pupil, the prince, the old man wisely and decorously retired to prepare himself for the great change. He lived ten years longer, chiefly in the village of Felpham, in Sussex;

amusing himself by occasional visits to his old friends in London, or to the prince at Brighton, by whom he was always received with scarcely less than filial respect; and then returning to his obscure, but amiable life of study, charity, and prayer. He died of a brief illness in 1819.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRINCE'S ESTABLISHMENT.

THE lavish distribution of patronage among the successive tutors and servants of the prince had excited some angry remark, and much ridicule. But the minister rapidly overwhelmed this topic of public irritation by supplying the empire with injuries on a larger scale. His propensity to govern by favours was the weakness of his nature ; and this weakness was soon urged into a diseased prodigality by the trials of his government. England was in danger.

America had just taken the bold, but guilty, step of declaring her independence. France was almost openly preparing for war. Every lurking bitterness of fancied wrong, or hopeless rivalry, throughout Europe, was starting into

sudden life at the summons of America. The beacon burning on the American shores was reflected across the Atlantic, and answered by a similar blaze in every corner of the continent. Even at home rebellion seemed to be rising, scarcely less in the measured hostility of the great English parties, than in the haughty defiance and splendid menace of Ireland, then half-frenzied with a sense of young vigour, and glittering in her first mail.

Lord North was now at the head of the Treasury, and on him rested the whole weight of the British administration; a burden too heavy for the powers of any one man, and, in this instance, certainly less solicited by his sense of power than urged upon him by the royal command. The king, abandoned by the Duke of Grafton, insulted by Chatham, tyrannised over by the powerful aristocracy of the whigs, and harassed by the perpetual irritations of the people, had soon felt the severe tenure of authority; there were even times when, in mingled scorn and indignation, he had thought of laying down the galling circle of an English crown, and retiring to Hanover. In this emergency his

choice had fallen upon North, a man of rank, of parliamentary experience, and probably of the full measure of zeal for the public service consistent with a personal career essentially of caution, suspicion, and struggle.

The minister had been all but born in the legislature, and his efforts had been early directed to legislatorial distinction. "Here comes blubbering North," was the observation of some official person to George Grenville, as they saw the future premier in the park, evidently in deep study.—"I'll wager that he's getting some harangue by heart for the House;" adding, "that he was so dull a dog, that it could be nothing of his own." The latter remark, however, Grenville more sagaciously repelled, by giving tribute to his parliamentary qualities, and saying, that, "If he laboured with his customary diligence, he might one day lead the councils of the country." The injurious yet natural result of North's official education was, his conceiving that the empire must be prosperous so long as the minister was secure, and that the grand secret of human government was a majority.

At a distance of time, when the clouds which then covered public affairs with utter mystery have melted away, we can discover that the minister, with all his intrepidity, would gladly have taken refuge under any protection from the storm that was already announcing itself, as if by thunderclaps, round the whole national horizon. But the competitors for his power were too certain of possession to suffer him to take shelter among them. His only alternative now was to resign his place, or make a desperate use of the prerogative. Whatever may be the virtue of later cabinets, the temptation would have been irresistible by any administration of the last century ; and we can scarcely blame North, so much as human nature in this day, if he embraced the evil opportunity in all its plenitude.

Ten peers at once were called up to the English house. But it was in Ireland, a country then as much famed for the rapid production of patriotism and its equally rapid conversion into official zeal ; as now for the more tangible product of sheep and oxen ; where the perpetual defalcation of revenue was proudly overpaid by the perpetual surplusage of orators, ready to defend

the right at all hazards and all salaries, and in the spirit of public faith, rally round government to its last shilling,—it was in Ireland, where the remoteness of the Treasury table seems never to have dulled the appetite of the guests for the banquet, that the minister at once won boundless partizanship, and dazzled the eyes of opposition at home by the display of his unchecked munificence.

One day, the 2nd of July, 1777, saw the Irish peerage reinforced by eighteen new barons, seven barons further secured by being created viscounts, and five viscounts advanced to earldoms! Against the wielder of patronage like this, what party fidelity could stand? There never had been such a brevet in Ireland: and every man suddenly discovered the unrighteousness of resistance to a minister so gifted with wisdom, and the privilege of dispensing favours. The fountain of honour had often before flowed copiously in ministerial emergencies; but now, as one of the Irish orators said on a similar occasion, in the curious pleasantry of his country, “It flowed forth as freely, spontaneously, and abundantly, as Holywell, in Wales, which turns

so many mills." It fairly washed Irish opposition away. Even in England it softened the more stubborn material of opposition to an extraordinary degree of plasticity. And, in the midst of popular outcry, the increase of public expenses, and disastrous news from America, the address was carried by a majority of three to one!

But a more inflexible antagonist than political gratitude suddenly rose against this feeble system of expedients; public misfortune was against the ministry. The American revolt had rapidly grown from a scorned insurrection into a recognised war; Washington's triumphs over the ignorance of a succession of generals, who should never have been trusted out of sight of Hyde Park, soon legitimatized rebellion. Victory threw a covering of dignity and justice over the original nakedness of a revolt, not more against England than against every principle of right and honour; and popular indignation at unexpected defeat turned round and revenged itself on the premier. In this emergency, North undoubtedly exhibited powers which surprised, and often baffled, his parliamentary assailants. If fancy

and facetiousness could have sustained an administration, his might have triumphed, for no man ever tossed those light shafts with more pungent dexterity. But his hour was come. Every wind that blew from America brought with it evil tidings. The time for parliamentary trifling was at an end. Night seemed to be coming down on the empire. Bolder hearts and more masculine hands must be found. Opposition, paralysed by its first defeats, started up into sudden boldness. Every new disaster of the cabinet recruited the ranks of its enemies. Treachery, too, rose within the camp. Every man who had anything to lose, soon provided for the future by abandoning the falling cause. Every man who had anything to gain, established his claim by more open hostility. At length, worn out by this perpetual assault, North solicited leave to resign, left his power to be fought for by the parties that instantly sprang up in the opposition; and, after one more grasp at office, which shewed only how ineradicable the love of power is in the human heart, retired —to make apolagues on political oblivion, and, like a sage of Indian fable, tell children that the

world was governed by sugar-plums, and that the sugar-plums were always forgotten, when their distributor had no more to give.

On the first of January, 1781, the prince, though then but little more than eighteen, was declared of age. A separate establishment, on a small scale, was assigned to him; and he was, for the first time, allowed to feel that the domestic discipline of Kew was about to be exchanged for a liberty more suitable to his age and station. Even this natural measure was beginning to form an angry topic with the journals and the public; when it was accidentally extinguished by another, which is given, as having attracted a remarkable degree of curiosity at the time.

This topic was the seizure of De la Motte, a French spy, of singular adroitness and some personal distinction. De la Motte had been a colonel in the French regiment of Soubise, and had behaved with gallantry on several occasions in the preceding war. On the peace his regiment was reduced; but a considerable estate falling to him, with the title of baron, he flourished for awhile in Paris. Play at length broke down

his resources; and, at once to evade his creditors and to profit by the gaming propensities of this country, he fixed himself in London; where, on the breaking out of the American war, he yielded to the temptation of acting as a private agent for the French ministry. An intercourse was soon established with a clerk in the navy department, through one Lutterloh, a German. The German figured as a country gentleman, and of no slight importance. He had taken a villa at Wickham, near Portsmouth, to be on the spot for intelligence of the fleets; he lived showily, and even kept a pack of hounds, and gave entertainments, by which he ingratiated himself with the resident gentry and officers, and was considered a valuable acquisition to the hilarity and companionship of the country. De la Motte remained in London, attracting no attention, but busily employed in forwarding the information received from his confederate; until a government messenger was despatched for him, who found him tranquilly writing at his lodgings in Bond Street, and conveyed him to the secretary-of-state's office, then in Cleveland Row. He was evidently taken by surprise, for

he had his principal papers about his person, and could find no better way to get rid of them than by dropping them on the stairs of the office. They were, of course, immediately secured and given to the secretary, Lord Hillsborough. The traitor's diligence was sufficiently proved by their value. They contained particular lists of all matters relating to the British dock-yards, and the force and state of every ship, with their complements of men at the time of their sailing; his accuracy even went so far as to give the number of seamen in the various naval hospitals.

An order was next issued for Lutterloh's apprehension. He was found preparing for the usual easy pursuits of his life, with his hunters and pack waiting for him, and his boots ready to be drawn on. The messengers prohibited his hunting for that day, and ordered him to deliver up the keys of his desk, where they found but money, cash and bills for 300*l.*; but on looking carefully at the bills, they perceived that they were all drawn payable to the same person, and dated on the same day, with those of De la Motte. Lutterloh now felt that he was

undone; and offered to make a general disclosure. His garden was dug up, and a packet of papers was produced in his hand-writing, the counterparts of those already seized on De la Motte. He acknowledged his employment by the French ministry, at the rate of fifty guineas a month; and pointed out the inferior agents. Ryder, the clerk, who had furnished the principal intelligence, was next arrested: this was the blackest traitor of them all; for he was in the receipt of a pension of 200*l.* a year, a considerable sum at that period, for services rendered in sounding the enemy's coasts, and had been put into an office in the dockyard at Plymouth, where he was employed by the Admiralty in contriving signals; which signals, it appears, he immediately communicated to the enemy. The last link was detected in the conveyancers of the intelligence across the channel, Rougier, a Frenchman, and his mistress, by whom the letters were despatched by way of Margate and Ostend.

This affair derived a peculiar public interest from the rumour, that high names were behind the curtain, which the attorney-general's speech

was deemed to substantiate, by his dwelling strongly upon the “*very great and dangerous* lengths” to which De la Motte’s money and connexions enabled him to go. The attorney and solicitor-generals were employed by government, and the celebrated Dunning was counsel for the prisoner. The confession of Lutterloh, who was accepted as king’s evidence, certainly shewed an extraordinary command of information. He had been first employed by De la Motte, in 1776, to furnish the French ministers with secret intelligence of matters relating to our navy. His allowance for this was trivial,—but eight guineas a month. But his information had soon become so important, that the allowance was raised to fifty guineas a month, besides occasional presents of money. He had also been in Paris, and held conferences with De Sartine, the French naval minister. There he had struck a bold bargain, not simply for returns of dockyards, but for whole fleets; offering a plan for the destruction of Commodore Johnson’s squadron, on condition of his receiving eight thousand guineas, and a third of the value of the ships for himself and his asso-

ciates. But the bargain was broken off by the singular economy of the Frenchman ; who hesitated at giving more than an eighth of the ships ! Offended by this want of due liberality in his old employers, he had sought out new ; and offered a plan to Sir Hugh Palliser for taking the French fleet ! Dunning's cross-examination of this villain was carried on with an indignant causticity which was long reckoned among his finest efforts. He tore the approver's character in pieces, but he could not shake his evidence. At length Dunning himself sank, he became exhausted with disgust and disdain, broke away from the court, and was taken home overpowered and seriously ill.

Lutterloh was one of those specimens of desperate principle, restless activity, and perpetual adventure, which might have figured in romance. He had tried almost every situation of life, from the lowest ; he had been in various trades, and roved between France, England, and America, wherever money was to be made by cunning or personal hazard. From the book-keeper of a Portsmouth inn, he had started into a projector of war ; had offered his agency to the

revolted colonies; and as their chief want in the early period of the struggle was arms, he had gone to America with a plan for purchasing the arms in the magazines of the minor German states. The plan was discountenanced by Congress, and he returned to Europe, to engage in the secret agency of France, through the medium of De la Motte.

Radcliffe, a smuggler, who had a vessel constantly running to Boulogne, was the chief carrier of the correspondence. His pay was 20*l.* a trip. Rougier, the carrier to Radcliffe, received eight guineas a month.

Yet it is a striking instance of the blind security in which the most crafty may be involved, and of the impossibility of confidence among traitors, that De la Motte's whole correspondence had for a long time passed through the hands of the English secretary of state himself; the letters being handed by Radcliffe to a government clerk, who transmitted them to Lord Hillsborough, by whom again, after having taken copies of them, they were forwarded to their original destination. Thus anticipated, they had undoubtedly the effect of seriously misleading

the French ministry. But, if governments will stoop to the crime of tempting wretched men to be traitors, or to the infamy of employing traitors ready made, they deserve to suffer. De la Motte was executed.

As the prince was now to take his place in the legislature, arrangements were commenced for supplying him with an income. The times were hostile to royal expenditure; and the king, for the double reason of avoiding any unnecessary increase to the public burdens, and of discouraging those propensities which he probably conjectured in the prince, demanded but 50,000*l.* a year, to be paid out of the civil list. The proposition was strongly contested in the Cabinet, long given down to scorn by the name of the Coalition. Fox insisted on making the grant 100,000*l.* a year. But his majesty was firm, and the ministry were forced to be content with adding 40,000*l.* and a complimentary address, to the 60,000*l.* for outfit proposed by the king.

The Duke of Portland, on the 23rd of June, brought down the following message to the lords:—

“ G. R. His majesty having taken into consideration the propriety of making an immediate and separate establishment for his dearly beloved son, the Prince of Wales, relies on the experience, zeal, and affection of the House of Lords, for their concurrence in, and support of, such measures as shall be most proper to assist his majesty in this design.”

The question was carried without a dissentient voice in the lords; and the commons readily voted the sums, 50,000*l.* for income, and 100,000*l.* for the outfit of the Prince’s household. Now fully began his checkered career.

There are few faults which we discover with more proverbial rapidity than the faults of others; and none which generate a more vindictive spirit of virtue than the faults of princes in the grave. Yet, without justice, history is but a more solemn libel; and no justice can be done to the memory of any public personage without considering the peculiar circumstances of his time.

The close of the American war was among the most extraordinary periods of modern

Europe. All England, all France, the whole continent, were in a state of the most vivid excitement:—England, rejoicing at the cessation of hostilities, galling to the pride of a country accustomed to conquer; yet with the stain of transatlantic defeat splendidly effaced by her triumph at Gibraltar, and her spirit raised again by this proof of the unimpaired energies of her naval and military power,—France, vain of her fatal success, and exulting in the twofold triumph of wresting America from England, and raising up a new rival for the sovereignty of the seas,—the continental states, habitually obeying the impulses of the two great movers of the world, England and France; and feeling the return of life in the new activity of all interests, public, personal, and commercial. But, in that hour, a fearful influence was at work, invisibly, but resistlessly, inflaming this feverish vividness of the European mind into ruin.

The story of the French Revolution is still to be told;* and the man by whom that tale of grandeur and atrocity is told, will bequeath the

* Mr. Alison's History of the War has lately appeared; a work of great manliness and eloquence.

most appalling lesson ever given to the tardy wisdom of nations. But the first working of the principle of ruin in France was brilliant; it spread an universal animation through the frame of foreign society. All was a hectic flush of vivacity. Like the Sicilian landscape, the gathering fires of the volcano were first felt in the singular luxuriance and fertility of the soil. Of all stimulants, political ambition lays the strongest hold on the sensibilities of man. The revolutionary doctrines, still covered with the graceful robes of patriotism and philosophy, seemed to lead the whole population of France into enchanted ground. Every hour had its new accession of light; every new step displayed its new wonder. Court formality—hereditary privilege—the solemnity of the altar—all that had hitherto stood as an obstacle to the full indulgence of natural impulses, all the rigid and stately barriers established by the wisdom of elder times against popular passion, were seen suddenly to shrink and dissolve away before the approach of the new regeneration, like mists before the sunbeams. The listless life of the man of rank was suddenly supplied with an ex-

citement that kindled all the latent activities of his nature ; the man of study found, with delight, his solitary speculation assuming a life and substantial shape before his eye, and the long arrears of fortune about to be paid in public fame and power ; the lower classes listened with fierce avidity to the declaration, that the time was at hand for enjoying their share of that opulent and glittering world on which they had hitherto gazed, with as little hope of reaching it as the firmament above their heads.

Thus was prepared the Revolution. Thus was laid under the foundations of the throne a deadly compound of real wrong and fantastic injury, of offended virtue and embittered vice, of the honest zeal of general good and the desperate determination to put all to hazard for individual licence, rapine, and revenge,—a mighty deposit and magazine of explosion, long visible to the eyes of Europe, invisible to the French government alone, and which only waited the first touch of the incendiary to scatter the monarchy in fragments round the world.

“Philosophy” was the grand leader in this progress of crime ; and it is a striking coinci-

dence, that at this period its true titles to national homage should have been, as if by an angry destiny, suffered to aid its popular ambition. Europe never teemed with more illustrious discoveries; the whole range of the sciences, from the simplest application of human ingenuity up to the most sublime trials of the intellect, found enthusiastic and successful votaries: the whole circle was a circle of living flame. The French philosophers collected the contributions of all Europe, and by embodying them in one magnificent work, claimed for themselves the peculiar guardianship and supremacy of human genius. Law, policy, and religion had long possessed their codes: the French philosophers boasted, that in the “*Encyclopédie*” they had first given the code of science. With all our hatred of the evil purposes of Diderot and D'Alembert, and all our present scorn of the delusions which their fiendish malignity was devised to inflict upon mankind, it is impossible to look upon their labours without wonder. France, within a few years, had outstripped all competition in the higher branches of mathematical learning, a pursuit eminently fitted to the fine

subtlety of the national genius; but she now invaded the more stubborn precincts of English and German research; seized upon chemistry and natural history; and, by the success of Lavoisier and Buffon, gave science a new and eloquent power of appeal to the reason and the imagination of man.

A multitude of minor triumphs, in the various provinces of invention, sustained the general glow of the intellectual world; but all were now to be extinguished, or rather raised into new lustre, by three almost contemporaneous discoveries, which to this hour excite astonishment, and which, at some future time decreed for the sudden advancement of the human mind to its full capacity of knowledge, may be among the noblest instruments of our science of nature. Those three were, Mongolfier's balloon, Franklin's conductors, and Herschel's Georgium Sidus. Never was there an invention so completely adapted to inflame the most fantastic spirit of a fantastic people as the balloon. The palpable powers of this fine machine, its beauty as an object, the theatrical nature of the spectacle presented in its ascents, the brilliant temerity of the aerial

navigators, soliciting the perils of an untried element, and rising to make the conquest of an unexplored region in a floating “argosie” of silk and gold, rich as the pavilion of a Persian king, filled the quick fancy of the nation with dreams. It absolutely crazed all France—king, philosophers, and populace. A march to the moon, or a settlement among the stars, was scarcely beyond the national hope. The secrets of the atmosphere were only lingering for French discovery; but the immediate propagation of the French name and power through the earth was regarded less as a probable achievement, than as an inevitable result of this most dazzling of all inventions.*

It may even now be thought, that there was something of curious appropriateness in the respective discoveries.—That the young audacity

* The topic superseded all others for the time. The answer of one of the city members to Lord Mansfield was a long-standing jest against the city. The earl, meeting him immediately on his return from France, asked, “Was the *Anglomanie* as prevalent as ever?” The honest citizen not recognising the word, and conceiving that France could furnish but one theme, answered, “that Anglomanies were to be seen every day in some part of Paris, and that he had seen a prodigious one go up on the day he left it.”

of America claimed the seizure of the lightning ; a sentiment not forgotten in Franklin's motto :

“ *Eripuit cælo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis.* ”

—That the balloon was an emblem of the showy volatility and ambitious restlessness of France : —while the discovery of a new planet, the revelation of a new throne of brightness and beauty in the firmament, was not unsuited to the solemn mind and religious dignity of the people of England.

But to England was given the substantial and crowning triumph : Cook's southern discoveries were made in this era ; and the nation justly hailed them, even less as cheering proofs of British intelligence and enterprise, than as a great providential donative of empire,—future dominion over realms without limit, and nations without number,—a new and superb portion of the universe, unveiled by science, and given to the tutelar hand of the British people, for the propagation of British arts and arms through the world, an eternal repository of our laws, our literature, and our religion.

The peace of 1782 threw open the continent.

It was scarcely proclaimed, when France was crowded with the English nobility. Versailles became the centre of all that was sumptuous in Europe. The graces of the young queen, then in the pride of youth and beauty; the pomp of the royal family and the noblesse; and the costliness of the fêtes and celebrations, for which France has been always famous; rendered the court the dictator of manners, morals, and politics to all the higher ranks of the civilized world. But the Revolution was now hastening with the strides of a giant upon France; the torch was already waving over the chambers of this morbid and thoughtless luxury. The corrective was terrible: history has no more stinging retrospect than the contrast of that brilliant time with the days of shame and agony which followed—the untimely fate of beauty, birth, and heroism,—the more than serpent-brood that started up in the path which France once emulously covered with flowers for the step of her rulers,—the hideous suspense of the dungeon,—the heart-broken farewell to life and royalty upon the scaffold! But the judgment was deserved. France had long been the grand corrupter; and the ad-

vance of her supremacy must in a few years have spread incurable disease through the moral frame of Europe.

The English men of rank were already bringing back with them its dissipation and its infidelity. Still, the immediate circle of the English court was clear. The honest virtue of the king held the courtiers in awe ; and the queen, with a wisdom, for which her name should long be held in honour, indignantly repulsed every attempt of female levity to approach her presence. But beyond this sacred circle the influence of foreign association was felt through every class of society. The writers of England, that body of whom the indiscretions of the higher ranks stand most in awe, had become less the guardians than the seducers of the public mind. The "Encyclopédie," still more the code of rebellion and irreligion than of science, had enlisted the majority in open scorn of all that the heart should practise or the head revere ; and the Parisian atheists scarcely exceeded the truth when they boasted of having raised a temple that was to be frequented by worshippers of every tongue. A cosmopolite,

infidel republic of letters was already lifting its front above the old sovereignties, gathering under its banners a race of mankind new to public struggle, the whole secluded, yet jealous and vexed race of labourers in the intellectual field; and summoning them to devote their vigour to the service of an Ambition, at whose right and left, like the urns of Homer's Jove, stood the golden founts of glory. London was rapidly becoming Paris, in all but name. There never was a period when the tone of our society was more polished, more animated, or more corrupt. Gaming, horse-racing, and still deeper deviations from the right rule of life, were looked upon as the essential embellishments of birth and fortune. Private theatricals, one of the most dexterous and assured expedients to extinguish, first the delicacy of woman, and then her virtue, were the favourite indulgence of high life; and, by an outrage on English decorum, which completed the likeness to France, women were beginning to try their influence in party, and entangle their feebleness in the absurdities and abominations of political intrigue.

It was in the midst of this luxurious period that the Prince of Wales commenced his public career. His rank alone would have secured him flatterers; but he had higher titles to homage. He was, then, one of the handsomest men in Europe: his countenance open and expressive; his figure tall, and strikingly proportioned; his address remarkable for easy elegance, and his whole air singularly noble. His contemporaries still describe him as the model of a man of fashion, and amusingly lament over the degeneracy of an age which no longer produces such perfection.

But he possessed qualities which might have atoned for a less attractive exterior. He spoke the principal modern languages with sufficient skill; he was a tasteful musician; his acquaintance with English literature was, in early life, unusually accurate and extensive; Markham's discipline, and Jackson's scholarship, had given him a large portion of classical knowledge; and nature had given him the more important public talent of speaking with fluency, dignity, and vigour.

Admiration was the right of such qualities,

and we can feel no surprise, if it were lavishly offered by both sexes. But it has been strongly asserted, that the temptations of flattery and pleasure were spread in his way for other objects than those of the hour ; that his wanderings were watched by the eyes of political seduction, and that every step which plunged him deeper into pecuniary embarrassment was triumphed in, as separating him more widely from his natural duties, alienating him from his excellent father, and compelling him in his helplessness to throw himself into the arms of factions alike hostile to his character and his throne.

CHAPTER V.

THE PRINCE'S EMBARRASSMENTS.

IN 1787, the state of the prince's income began to excite the anxious attention of parliament and the country. The allowance given three years before had been found totally inadequate to his expenditure, and there was at length no resource but in applying to the nation.

On the original proposal of 50,000*l.* a year, the "prince's friends," as they were termed, for he had already found political protectors, had strenuously protested against the narrowness of the sum. But the prince decorously reprehending their zeal, had declared his extreme reluctance to be the cause of any misunderstanding between the king and his ministers.

Yet a short experience shewed, that the in-

come was altogether inadequate to the expenses of Carlton House. The prince was now upwards of 150,000*l.* in debt. His creditors, perhaps in some degree alarmed by the notorious alienation of the court, began suddenly to press for payment. The topic became painfully public; the king was appealed to, and by his command a full statement was laid before him. But the result was an expression of royal surprise and displeasure, accompanied with a direct refusal to interfere, formally conveyed through the premier.

Family quarrels are proverbial for exhibiting errors on both sides; and the quarrel on this occasion, high as the personages were, made no exception to the rule. The prince was treated sternly; in return, he acted rashly. The royal indignation might have been justly softened by recollecting the inexperience, the dangerous associates, and the strong temptations of the heir-apparent; and that measure ought to have been made an act of favour, which was so soon discovered to be an act of necessity. On the other hand, the prince, impetuously, on the day after the royal answer, broke up his household,

dismissed his officers in attendance, ordered his horses to be sold, shut up every apartment of his palace not required for immediate personal accommodation, and commenced living the life of a hermit, a life which he called that of a private gentleman; his political friends, that of an ancient sage; and the court, that of a young rebel. The decided impression on the king's mind was, that this offensive step was suggested by individuals whose first object was to enlist the sympathies of the nation against the minister, and whose next was, to see the king involved in the disgrace of his cabinet. A remarkable incident at this period rendered the alienation palpable to the empire. An attempt made in the open streets, by a maniac, Margaret Nicholson, to assassinate the king,*—an attempt which probably failed only from the accidental bending of the knife; had been immediately communicated to all the authorities, and the principal persons connected with the royal family; but with one exception,—to the prince no communication was made. He heard it at Brighton, and hastened to Windsor, where he

* August 2, 1786.

was received by the queen alone. The king was inaccessible.

But the system of seclusion was too little adapted to the great party who had totally engrossed the direction of the prince, and too repulsive to the natural habits of rank and birth, to last long. By degrees, the windows of Carlton House were opened, and the deserted halls were given to the light once more. His advisers now prompted him to strengthen his public influence by personal hospitality; and, from all the records of those years, we must believe, that no host ever possessed more abundantly the charm of giving additional zest to the luxuries of the banquet. Beginning to give frequent entertainments; from personal pleasure, the feeling grew into political interest; and it was at length resolved, that the prince owed it to his own character, to shew that he was not afraid of public investigation.

The opening of the budget* was considered a proper time, and the subject was confided to the hands of Alderman Newnham, no orator, but a man of mercantile wealth and personal

* April 20, 1787.

respectability. This advocate contented himself, in the first instance, with a brief panegyric on the prince's efforts to meet his difficulties; and a demand, whether ministers intended to bring forward any proposition for retrieving his affairs; concluding with the words, that "though the conduct of that illustrious individual under his difficulties reflected the highest honour on his character, yet nothing could be surer to bring indelible disgrace upon the nation, than suffering him to remain any longer in his present embarrassed circumstances."

Pitt's reply was short, but peremptory.—"It was not his duty to bring forward a subject of the nature that had been mentioned, without his majesty's commands. It was not necessary, therefore, that he should say more, than that on the present occasion he had not been honoured with any such commands."

The campaign was now fairly begun, and opposition determined to crush the minister. Private meetings were held, friends were summoned, and the strength of parties was about to be tried in a shock which, in its results, might have shattered the constitution. But, Pitt's sag-

city saw the coming storm, and he faced it with the boldness that formed so prominent a quality of his great character. He sternly denounced the subject, as one not merely delicate but dangerous ; he warned the mover of this hazardous matter of the evils which rashness must produce ; and concluded a short but powerful address, by threatening to call for "disclosures which must plunge the nation into the most formidable perplexity." While the house were listening with keen anxiety to this lofty menace, and expecting on what head the lightnings were to be launched, he renewed the charge, by turning full on the opposition bench, and declaring, that if the "honourable member should *persist* in his determination to bring his motion forward again, his majesty's government would be *compelled* to take the steps which they should adopt ; and that, for his own part, however distressing it might be to his personal feelings, from his profound respect for the royal family ; he had a public duty to discharge which he would discharge, freely, fairly, and unconditionally."

A succession of debates followed, in which the whole vigour of party, and no slight portion

of its virulence, was displayed. Rolle,* the member for Devonshire, with a zeal which exposed him naked to all the fiery wrath of Sheridan and Fox, and lifted him up as a general mark for the shafts of opposition wit, at length embodied Pitt's mysterious charge into "matters by which church and state might be seriously affected,"—an allusion fully understood to refer to a rumoured marriage of the prince with Mrs. Fitzherbert.

Sheridan, with dishonest, yet amusing, pleasantry, instantly denied the truth of the report, which he said—"the slight share of understanding that nature had vouchsafed to him was altogether unable to comprehend; though, to be sure, something of his ignorance might be accounted for by his not being peculiarly fond of putting himself in the established school for that kind of learning. Among all the shows to which curiosity had led him in the metropolis, he had unfortunately omitted the *Whispering* gallery in the neighbourhood of Whitehall. He was also confident, that there was a great deal of recon-

* Subsequently Lord Rolle, a faithful and firm defender of the constitution.

dite knowledge to be picked up by any diligent student who had taken his degree on the *back stairs*, and he duly commended the progress the honourable gentleman had made in those profitable studies. For his own part, Heaven help him ! he had always found the treasury passages at best, cold, dark, and cheerless ; he believed the conscience as well as the body might have a rheumatic touch ; and he acknowledged that he was never the better for the experiment. But, where *he* had heard only the ominous cries and wailings of the wind, the ears of others, more happily disposed, might be more fortunate ; where he had heard only the rage of Auster and Eurus, to others Auster might come ‘the zephyr perfumed from my lady’s bedchamber ;’ and Eurus be the

—‘*purpureo spirans ab ortu, eois Eurus equis.*’

There the honourable gentleman and his friends might be regaled with those snatches and silver touches of melody which they shaped and expanded into harmonies, on so grand and swelling a scale, for the admiration of the house and the country.”

The house laughed, but Rolle's remarks had made an impression: and Fox, long and unaccountably absent from the debates, was compelled to appear. This powerful man now became the challenger in his turn.—“ He stood there prepared to substantiate every denial that had been made by his honourable friend, (Sheridan.) He demanded investigation. He defied the sharpest scrutiny, however envenomed by personal feelings, to detect in the conduct of the prince, as a gentleman, or as the hope of an illustrious line, any one act derogatory to his character. He came armed with the immediate authority of his royal highness to assure the house, that there was no part of his conduct which he was either afraid or unwilling to have investigated in the most minute manner.”

This bold defiance, delivered with the haughtiest tone and gesture, raised a tumult of applause, which was interrupted only by his suddenly fixing his eyes full on the minister; and, as if he disdained to pour his vengeance on minor culprits, heaping the whole weight of reprobation upon him, whom he intimated to be the origin of the calumny.

“ As to the allusions,” said he, scornfully, “ of the honourable member for Devon, of danger and so forth to church and state, I am not bound to understand them until he shall make them intelligible ; but I suppose they are meant in reference to that *falsehood* which has been so *sedulously* propagated out of doors for the wanton sport of the vulgar, and which I now pronounce, by *whomsoever invented*, to be a miserable calumny, a low, malicious falsehood.”—“ He had hoped, that in that house a tale, only fit to impose upon the lowest persons in the streets, would not have gained credit ; but, when it appeared that an *invention* so monstrous, a report, of what had not the smallest degree of foundation, had been *circulated* with so much industry as to make an impression on the mind of members of that house, it proved the extraordinary efforts made by the enemies of his royal highness to propagate the grossest and most malignant falsehoods, with a view to depreciate his character and injure him in the opinion of the country. He was at a loss to imagine what *species* of party could have fabricated so base a calumny. Had there existed in

the kingdom such a faction as an anti-Brunswick faction, to it he should have certainly imputed the invention of so malicious a falsehood; for he knew not what other description of men could have *felt an interest* in first forming and then circulating, with *more than ordinary* assiduity, a tale in every particular so unfounded. His royal highness had authorized him to declare, that as a peer of parliament he was ready, in the other house, to submit to any the most pointed questions; or to afford his majesty, or his majesty's ministers, the fullest assurance of the utter falsehood of the statement in question, which *never had*, and which common sense must see never could have, happened.

After this philippic, to which Pitt listened with the utmost composure, but which produced an extraordinary interest in the house, Fox adverted to the original purpose of the application: "Painful and delicate the subject undoubtedly was; but however painful it might be, the consequences were attributable solely to *those* who had it in their power to supersede the necessity of the prince's coming to parlia-

ment, to relieve him from a situation embarrassing to himself and disgraceful to the country."

This speech may be taken as a specimen of Fox's vituperative style,—the reiterated phrases of scorn, the daring defiance, and the reckless mass of contempt and condemnation, which he habitually flung upon his adversary. But the full effect can be conceived only by those who have heard this great speaker. His violent action, confused voice, and ungainly form, were forgotten, or rather, by one of the wonders of eloquence, became portions of his power. A strong sincerity seemed to hurry him along: his words, always emphatic, seemed to be forced from him by the fulness and energy of his feelings; and in the torrent he swept away the adversary.

This speech decided the question for the time. Yet Rolle still persisted in his alarms, and still brought down upon himself the declamation of Sheridan and the retorts of Fox, who, at last, bitterly told him, that "though what he had said before was, he thought, sufficient to satisfy

every candid mind, he was willing still to re-state and re-explain, and, *if possible*, satisfy the *most perverse*.*

The member for Devon finally declared, that he had spoken only from his affection for the prince; that "he had not said he was dissatisfied," and that he now left the whole matter to the judgment of the house. Pitt covered his friend's retreat by a defence of the privileges of speech in the legislature.

But such contests were too hazardous to be wisely provoked again. Misfortune, which in private life has a singular facility in stripping the sufferer of his friends, in public life often gathers the popular sympathy round him. The man who would have died forgotten in his cell, when brought to the scaffold, is followed by the sympathy of the multitude. The general voice

* Unfortunately for those professions, it has been since proved by the lady's relatives, that she was, at that moment, as much the wife of the prince as a Romish priest could make her! If Fox was deceived, he ought to have felt incurably insulted by the deception; if he was not, what language can be too contemptuous for confederacy in imposture!

began to rise against the “severity of government;” and in a few days after the debate,* the prince was informed by the minister, that if the motion intended for the next day were withdrawn, everything should be settled to his satisfaction. Accordingly, Alderman Newnham communicated to the house, in which four hundred members were present, the intelligence that his motion was now rendered unnecessary, and all was congratulation.

The ministerial promise was kept; but kept with a full reserve of the royal displeasure. A stern rebuke was couched in the message to parliament.

“G. R. It is with the *greatest concern* his majesty acquaints the House of Commons that, from the accounts which have been laid before his majesty by the Prince of Wales, it appears, that the prince has incurred a debt to a large amount, which, if left to be discharged out of his annual income, would render it impossible for him to support an establishment suited to his rank and station.

“Painful as it is at all times to his majesty to

* May 3.

propose an addition to the many expenses necessarily borne by his people, his majesty is induced, from his paternal affection to the Prince of Wales, to recur to the liberality and attachment of his faithful commons, for their assistance on an occasion so interesting to his majesty's feelings, and to the ease and honour of so distinguished a branch of his royal family.

“ His majesty could not, however, expect or desire the assistance of this house, but on a well-grounded expectation that the prince will *avoid contracting any debts in future.*

“ With a view to this object, and from an anxious desire to remove any possible doubt of the sufficiency of the prince's income to support amply the dignity of his situation, his majesty has directed a sum of £10,000 per annum to be paid out of the civil list, in addition to the allowance which his majesty has hitherto given him; and his majesty has the satisfaction to inform the house, that the Prince of Wales has given his majesty the fullest assurances of his determination to confine his future expenses within his income, and has also settled a plan for arranging those expenses in the several depart-

ments, and for fixing an order for payment, under such regulations, as his majesty trusts will effectually *secure the due execution* of the prince's intentions.

“ His majesty will direct an estimate to be laid before this house of the sum wanting to complete, in a proper manner, the work which has been undertaken at Carlton House, as soon as the same can be prepared with sufficient accuracy, and recommends it to his faithful commons to consider of making some provision for this purpose.”

This account was shortly afterwards laid on the table :—

Debts.

Bonds and debts	£13,000
Purchase of houses	4,000
Expenses of Carlton House	53,000
Tradesmen's bills	90,804
	<hr/>
	£160,804

Expenditure from July, 1783, to July, 1786.

Household, &c.	£29,277
Privy-purse	16,050
Payments made by Col. Hotham, particu- lars delivered in to his majesty	37,203
Other extraordinaries	11,406
	<hr/>
	£93,936

Salaries	.	.	.	.	.	.	54,734
Stables	.	.	.	.	.	.	37,919
Mr. Robinson's	.	.	.	.	.	.	7,059
							£193,68

On the day following the presentation of this paper, the commons carried up an address to the throne, humbly desiring that his majesty would order 161,000*l.* to be issued out of the civil list for the payment of the debt, and a sum of 20,000*l.* for the completion of Carlton House.

This proceeding had the usual fate of half measures, it palliated the evil only to make it return in double force. It shewed the king's displeasure, without ensuring the prince's retrenchment. The public clamoured at the necessity for giving away so large a sum of the national money; while the creditors, whom the sum, large as it was, would but inadequately pay, loudly pronounced themselves defrauded. Whether the leaders of the legislature were rejoiced or discontented remained in their own bosoms. But Pitt had accomplished the important purpose of suppressing, for the time, a topic which might have deeply degraded the cause of

loyalty; and Fox's keenness must have seen in this imperfect measure the very foundation on which a popular leader would love to erect a grievance. It gave him the full use of the prince's injuries for all the purposes of opposition. Nothing could be more successful. Hopeless of future appeal, stung by public rebuke, and committed before the empire in hostility to the court and the minister, the prince was now thrown completely into his hands.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRINCE'S FRIENDS.

THERE seems to be a law of politics, by which the heir of the crown is inevitably opposed to the crown. This grew into a proverb in Holland, when the stadtholderate had become hereditary ; and may have found its examples in all countries where the constitution retains a vestige of freedom. The line of the Georges has furnished them for three generations.

Frederic, Prince of Wales, son of George the Second, was in constant opposition to the court, was the centre of a powerful party, and was even involved in personal dispute with the king. There was a curious similitude in his whole early life to that of George IV.,—the origin of the alienation being, the old “root of

all evil," money. Opposition, headed by Pulteney, (the Fox of his day,) adopted the prince's cause, and moved in parliament for the increase of his income to 100,000*l.* The king resented equally the demand and the connexion; and the dispute was carried on with the natural implacability of a family quarrel. The prince collected the wits round him; the king closeted himself with a few antiquated and formal nobles. The prince's residence, at Ciefden, in Buckinghamshire, was enlivened by perpetual festivity, balls, banquets, and plays.* St. James's was a royal fortress, in which the king sat guarded from the approach of all public gaiety. Frederic pushed the minister so closely, that he had no refuge but in a reconciliation between the illustrious belligerents. Walpole, perplexed by perpetual debate, and feeling the ground giving way under him, proposed an addition of 50,000*l.* to the prince's income, and 200,000*l.* for the discharge of his debts. But here the parallel failed. Walpole's

* Among which was the masque of Alfred, by Thomson and Mallet, written in honour of the Hanover accession, with Quin in the part of Alfred.

hour was come; opposition, now conscious of his weakness, determined to give him no respite. The prince haughtily refused any accommodation while the obnoxious minister was suffered to remain in power. Walpole was crushed. The prince led opposition into the royal presence; and the spoils of office rewarded them for a struggle carried on in utter scorn alike of the king's feelings and the national interests, but unquestionably distinguished by great talent, dexterity, and determination. Yet victory was fatal to them: they speedily quarrelled for the spoils, and Walpole had his revenge, in the disgrace of Pulteney for ever.

On the death of Prince Frederic, the next heir, Prince George, became the prize of opposition, headed by Pitt (Lord Chatham), Lord Temple, and the Grenvilles. Leicester-house, the residence of his mother, again eclipsed St. James's, and the Newcastle administration trembled at the popularity of this rival court. To withdraw the heir from party, the king offered him a residence in St. James's. But before the hostility could be matured into open resistance, a stroke of apoplexy put an end to the royal life, placed the prince on the throne, and

turned the panegyrics of opposition into sarcasms on Scotch influence, burlesques on the princess-mother's presumed passion for the handsome minister, and wrath at the sovereign.

In other lands the king is a despot, and the heir-apparent a rebel; in England, the relation is softened, and the king is a tory, and the heir-apparent a whig. Without uncovering the grave, to bring up things for dispute which have lain there till their shape and substance are half dissolved away in that great receptacle of the follies and fortunes of mankind, it may well be admitted, that there was much in the contrast of men and parties to have allured the young Prince of Wales to the side of opposition.

Almost prohibited, by the rules of the English court, from bearing any important part in the government; almost condemned to silence in the legislature by the custom of the constitution; almost restricted, by the etiquette of his birth, from exerting himself in any of those pursuits which cheer and elevate a manly mind with the noble consciousness that it is of value to its country; the life of the eldest born of the throne offers strong temptations to those who would make it a splendid sinecure. The valley of

Rasselas, with its impassable boundary, and its luxurious and spirit-subduing bowers, was but an emblem of princely existence ; and the moralist is unfit to decide on human nature who, in estimating the career, forgets the temptation.

It is neither for the purpose of undue praise to those who are now gone beyond human opinion, nor with the zeal of hazarding romantic conjectures, that the long exclusion of the Prince of Wales from public activity is pronounced to have been a signal misfortune to himself and to the nation. The same mental and bodily gifts which were lavished on the listless course of fashionable life might have assisted the councils, or thrown new lustre on the arms of his country ; other benefits, too, might have followed—the royal tree, exposed to the free blasts of heaven, might have been relieved from those parasite plants and weeds which encumbered its growth ; and the nation might have learned to be proud of its stateliness, and loved to shelter in its shade.

The education of the royal family had been conducted with so regular and minute an attention, that the lapses of the prince's youth excited peculiar displeasure in the king. The family

discipline had been almost that of a public school; their majesties generally rose at six, breakfasted at eight with the two elder princes, and then summoned the younger children: the several teachers next appeared, and the time till dinner was spent in diligent application to languages and the severer kinds of literature, varied by lessons in music, drawing, and the other accomplishments. The king was frequently present: the queen superintended the younger children, like an English mother. The two elder princes laboured at Greek and Latin with their tutors, and were by no means spared in consequence of their rank. “How would your majesty wish to have the princes treated?” was said to be Markham’s inquiry of the king. “Like the sons of any private English gentleman,” was the manly and sensible answer—“If they deserve it, let them be flogged: do as you used to do at Westminster.”

The command was adhered to, and the royal culprits acquired their learning by the plebeian mode.

The story is also told, that on the subsequent change of preceptors, the command having been

repeated, Arnald, or one of his assistants, thought proper to inflict a punishment, without taking into due consideration, that the infants whom Márkham had disciplined with impunity were now stout boys. However, the Prince and the Duke of York held a little council on the matter, and organised rebellion to the rod: on its next appearance they rushed upon the tutor, wrested his weapons from him, and exercised them with so much activity on his person, that the offence was never attempted again.

Louis the Fourteenth, when, in his intercourse with the accomplished society of France, he felt his own deficiencies, often upbraided the foolish indulgence which had left his youth without instruction; exclaiming, “Was there not birch enough in the forest of Fontainebleau?” George the Third was determined that no reproach of this nature should rest upon his memory; and probably no private family in the empire were educated with more diligence in study, more attention to religious observances, or more rational respect for their duties to society, than the children of the throne.

This course of education is so fully acknow-

ledged, that it has even been made a charge against the good sense of that excellent man and monarch, as stimulating some of the dissipations of the prince's early life, by the contrast between undue restraint and sudden liberty. Yet the charge is frivolous; the princes were under no restraint but from evil; they had their little sports and companionships; they were even, from time to time, initiated into such portions of court life as might be understood at their age; children's balls were given; the king, who was fond of music, had frequent concerts, at which the royal children were present, forming, from their number and remarkable beauty, by much the most striking portion of the spectacle; and in the numerous celebrations at Kew and Windsor they enjoyed their full share. All their birthdays were kept with great festivity; and August, from its being an auspicious period for the royal family, the month of the Hanover accession, the battle of Minden, and the birth of three of the princes, was almost a continual holiday: prizes were given to the watermen on the Thames, sports were held in Windsor and Kew, and the old English time of both rustic

and royal merriment seemed to have come again.

But, there can be no difficulty in relieving the memory of George the Third from the charge of undue restraint; for nothing can be idler than the theory, that to let loose the passions of the young is to inculcate self-control. Vice is not to be conquered by contagion; and the parent who gives his sons a taste of evil will soon find, that what he gave as a sedative has been swallowed as an intoxication.

The palpable misfortune of the prince was, that on emerging from the palace he had still to learn human character, the most essential public lesson for his rank. Even the virtues of his parents were injurious to that lesson. Through infancy and youth he had seen nothing round him that could give a conception of the infinite heartlessness and artifice, the specious vice, and the selfish profession, that must beset him from his first step into life. A public education might have in some degree opened his eyes to the realities of human nature; for even among boys, some bitter evidence of the hollowness and hypocrisy of life is administered. The prince's

understanding might thus have been early awakened to that salutary caution, which would have cast out before him, naked, if not ashamed, the tribe of flatterers and pretended friends who so suddenly and so long perverted his natural popularity.

Yet there was much in the times to perplex a man of his high station and hazardous opportunities. The habits of society have been since so much changed, that it is difficult to conceive the circumstances of that singular and stirring period. We live in a day of mediocrity in all things. The habits of fifty years ago were, beyond all comparison, those of a more prominent, showy, and popular system. The English nobleman sustained the honours of his rank with a larger display; the English man of fashionable life was more conspicuous in his establishment, in his appearance, and even in his eccentricities: the phaeton, his favourite equipage, was not more unlike the cabriolet, that miserable and creeping contrivance of our day, than his rich dress and cultivated manners were unlike the wretched costume and low fooleries that make the vapid lounger of modern society.

The women of rank, if not wiser nor better than their successors, at least aimed at more conspicuous objects; they threw open their mansions to the intelligent and accomplished minds of their time, and instead of *fête*-ing every foreign coxcomb, who came with no better title to respect than his grimace and his guitar, surrounded themselves with the wits, orators, and scholars of England.

The contrivance of watering-places, too, had not been then adopted as an escape, less from the heats of summer than from the observances of summer hospitality. The great families returned to their country-seats at the close of parliament, and their return was a holiday to the country. They received their neighbours with opulent entertainment; cheered and raised the character of the humbler ranks by their liberality and their example; extinguished the little oppressions, and low propensities to crime, which habitually grow up where the lord is an absentee; and by their mere presence, and in the simple exercise of the natural duties of rank and wealth, were the great benefactors of society. A noble family of that time would no

more have thought of flying from its country neighbours to creep into lodgings at a watering-place, and hide its diminished head among the meagre accommodations and miscellaneous society of a sea-coast village, than it would of burning its title-deeds. The expenses of the French war may have done something of the modern mischief; and the reduced rent-rolls of the nobility may countenance a more limited expenditure. But whether the change have been in matter or mind, in the purse or the spirit, the change is undeniable; and where it is not compelled by circumstances, is contemptible.

The prince was launched into public life in the midst of this high-toned time. But, with an income of 50,000*l.* a year, he was to take the lead of the English nobility, many of them with twice his income, and, of course, free from the heavy incumbrances of an official household. All princes are made to be plundered; and the youth, generosity, and companionship of the prince marked him out for especial plunder. He was instantly fastened on by every glittering profligate who had a debt of honour to dis-

charge, by every foreign marquess who had a *bijou* to dispose of at ten times its value, by every member of the turf who had an unknown Eclipse or Childers in his stables, and by every nameless claimant on his personal patronage or his unguarded finance ; until he fell into the hands of the Jews, who offered him money at fifty per cent. ; and from them into the hands of political Jews, who offered him the national treasury, at a price to which a hundred per cent. was moderation.

At this time the prince was nineteen, as ripe an age as could be desired for ruin ; and in three short years the consummation was arrived at—he was ruined.

The Prince of Wales had now reached the second period of his public life. He had felt the bitterness of contracted circumstances, and the still keener trial of parliamentary appeal. His personal feelings had been but slightly spared in either ; and we can be scarcely surprised at his shrinking from that cabinet in which he had found none but baffled castigators, and attaching himself more closely to that oppo-

sition in which he had found none but successful friends.

It is certain, that few men of his rank had ever been more irritated by the severity of public inquisition into the habits of their lives. Court scandals are at all times precious ; but the power of probing the wounds of princely life was never indulged in more unhesitatingly, for the sake of popular science. The public writers, too, plunged fiercely into the merits on both sides, and

“ By decision more embroiled the fray.”

The newspapers, those formidable scourges of public error, were just beginning to assume their modern influence ; and, like all possessors of unexpected power, their first use of it was to lay on the lash without mercy. Crabbe, then young, tremulously describes the terrors that must have naturally startled the chaplain of a duke at the rise of those flagellators ; though, like all satirists, he overlooks the actual and measureless good in the picturesque evil.

“ But Sunday past, what numbers flourish then,
What wondrous labours of the press and pen !

Diurnal most, some thrice each week affords,
 Some only once; O, avarice of words!
 When thousand starving minds such manna seek,
 To drop the precious food but once a week!

“Endless it were to sing the powers of all,
 Their names, their numbers, how they rise and fall.
 Like baneful herbs, the gazer’s eye they seize,
 Rush to the head, and poison where they please;
 Like summer flies, a busy, buzzing train,
 They drop their maggots in the idler’s brain;
 The genial soil preserves the fruitful store,
 And there they grow, and breed a thousand more.

* * * * *

“Nor here th’ infectious rage for party stops,
 But flits along from palaces to shops;
 Our weekly journals o’er the land abound
 And spread their plague and influenza round.
 The village, too, the peaceful, pleasant plain,
 Breeds the whig farmer and the tory swain;
 Brook’s and St. Alban’s boasts not, but instead
 Stares the Red Ram, and swings the Rodney’s Head.

“Here clowns delight the weekly news to con,
 And mingle comments as they blunder on;
 To swallow all their varying authors teach,
 To spell a title, and confound a speech.
 One with a muddled spirit quits the News,
 And claims his native licence,—to abuse;
 Then joins the cry, that ‘all the courtly race
 Strive but for power, and parley but for place;’

Yet hopes, good man, that all may still be well,
And thanks his stars—he has a vote to sell.”*

If the prince had been a man of a harsh and gloomy mind, he had already found matter to qualify him for a Timon. But his experience produced no bitterness against human nature, though it may have urged him into more intimate connexion with the party which promised, at once to protect and to avenge. Long attracted to Fox by the social captivations of that singularly-gifted individual, he now completely joined him as the politician, made friends of his friends, and enemies of his enemies, unfurled the opposition banner, and all but declared himself the head of the great aristocratic combination, which was more than ever resolved to shake the minister upon his throne.

In 1792 † the prince had been introduced to the house of peers, attended by the Dukes of Cumberland, Richmond, Portland, and Lord Lewisham, and had spoken on the Marquess

* Poem of “The Newspaper,” published in 1784.

† November 11.

of Abercorn's motion for an address on the proclamation for repressing seditious meetings. This speech, much admired for the remarkable grace of its delivery, was in substance, that—"He was educated in the principle, and he should ever preserve it, of a reverence for the constitutional liberties of the people; and as on those liberties the happiness of the people depended, he was determined, as far as his interest could have any force, to support them. The matter at issue was, whether the constitution was or was not to be maintained; whether the wild ideas of theory were to conquer the wholesome maxims of established practice; and whether those laws, under which we had flourished for so long a series of years, were to be subverted by a reform unsanctioned by the people.

" As a person nearly and dearly interested in the welfare, and he would emphatically add, in the happiness and comfort, of the people, it would be treason to the principles of his mind if he did not come forward and declare his disapprobation of those seditious publications which had occasioned the motion now before their lordships: his interest was connected with the interests

of the people ; they were so inseparable, that unless both parties concurred, happiness could not exist.

“ On this great, this solid basis, he grounded the vote which he meant to give ; and that vote should unequivocally be, for a concurrence with the address of the commons.” He concluded by saying, with peculiar effect,—“ I exist by the love, the friendship, and the benevolence of the people, and them I never will forsake as long as I live.”

This speech, whether suggested by the Duke of Portland (as was rumoured), or conceived by the prince, was obviously ministerial. But in those days, when the lord of the treasury might in the next month be thundering at the head of its assailants, and in the month after be flinging back their baffled bolts from the secure height of ministerial power ; when in one month he might be the rebellious Titan, and in the next the legitimate Jove, the waving of whose curls shook the Olympus of Downing-street from its summit to its base ; the rapid changes of administration made party allegiance curiously fugitive. Before the worshipper had

time to throw himself at the foot of the altar, the idol was often gone, and another was in possession—before the cargo of fealty could reach the port, the port was often in dust and ashes, or a hostile ensign waved upon its walls. North, Pitt, Shelburne, Fox, and Rockingham, successively mastered the treasury bench, from session to session, until government had begun to be looked on as only a more serious masquerade, where every man might assume every character in turn, and where the change of dress was the chief difference between the Grand Turk and his buffoon.

The prince was now the great political prize. From the hour when he was first shewn behind his gilded lattice, at St. James's, to the people, he had been the popular hope. The king's early illness, which made it probable that the heir might soon be the master of the crown, had fixed the public interest still more anxiously upon him, and the successive cabinets felt the full importance of his name: but now the whole advantage was on the side of opposition. England had never before seen such a phalanx armed against a minister. A crowd of men of the highest natural

talents, of the most practised ability, and of the first public weight in birth, fortune, and popularity, were nightly arrayed against administration, sustained by the solitary eloquence of the young Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Yet Pitt was not careless of followers. He was more than once even charged with sedulously gathering round him a host of subaltern politicians, whom he might throw forward as skirmishers,—or sacrifices, which they generally were. Powis, describing the “forces led by the right hon. gentleman on the treasury bench,” said, in this sense,—“the first detachment may be called his body-guard, who shoot their little arrows against those who refuse allegiance to their chief.”* This light infantry were, of course, soon scattered when the main battle joined. But Pitt, a son of the aristocracy, was an aristocrat in all his nature, and he loved to see young men of family round him; some were chosen for their activity, if not for their force; and some, probably, from personal liking. In the latter period of his career, his train was swelled by a more influential and pro-

* Wraxall’s Memoirs.

mising race of political worshippers, among whom were Lord Mornington, since Marquess Wellesley; Ryder, since Lord Harrowby; and Wilberforce, undignified by title, but possessing an influence which, perhaps, he valued more. The minister's chief agents in the house of commons were Mr. Grenville (since Lord Grenville) and Dundas.

Yet, among those men, whether of birth or business, what rival could be found to the popular leaders on the opposite side of the house,—to Burke, Sheridan, Grey, Windham, or to Fox, that

“ Prince and chief of many throned powers,
Who led th’ embattled seraphim to war.”

Without adopting the bitter remark of the Duke de Montausier to Louis the Fourteenth, in speaking of Versailles:—“ Vous avez beau faire, sire, vous n’en ferez jamais qu’un favori sans mérite,” it was impossible to deny the inferiority of the ministerial followers on all the great points of public impression. A debate in that day was one of the highest intellectual treats: there was always some new and vigorous feature in the display on both sides; some striking

effort of imagination, of masterly reasoning, or, at least, of that fine sophistry, in which, as was said of the vices of the French noblesse, half the evil was atoned by the elegance. The ministerialists sarcastically pronounced that, in every debate, Burke said something which no one else ever said; Sheridan, something which no one else ever ought to say; and Fox, something which no one else would ever dare to say. But the world, fairer in its decision, did justice to their extraordinary powers; and found in the Asiatic amplitude and splendour of Burke; in Sheridan's alternate subtlety and strength, reminding it at one time of Attic dexterity, and another, of the uncalculating boldness of barbarism; and in Fox's matchless English self-possession, unaffected vigour, and overflowing sensibility, a perpetual source of admiration.

Yet it was in the intercourses of social life that the superiority of opposition was most incontestible. Pitt's life was in the senate: his true place of existence was on the benches of that ministry which he conducted with such unparalleled ability and success: he was, in the fullest sense of the phrase, a public man; and his in-

dulgences, in the few hours which he could spare from the business of office, were more like the necessary restoratives of a frame already shattered, than the easy gratifications of a man of society. On this principle we can safely account for the common charge of his propensity to wine. He found it essential, to relieve a mind and body exhausted by the perpetual pressure of affairs; wine was his medicine, and it was drunk in total solitude, or with a few friends from whom the minister had no concealment. Over his wine the speeches for the night were often concerted; and when the dinner was done, the table council broke up, only to finish the night in the house.

The secret history of those symposia might still clear up some of the problems which once exceedingly perplexed politicians. On one occasion, Pitt's silence on a motion brought forward by the present Earl Grey, with great expectation and some effect, excited no less surprise, than its being replied to by Dundas, whose warfare was generally subordinate. The clubs next day were in a fever of conjecture on this

apparent surrender of a supremacy, of which the minister was supposed to be peculiarly jealous.

The mystification lasted until long after; when Dundas laughingly acknowledged that, on the night before the debate, Pitt and some of their immediate friends had been amusing themselves after dinner with imaginary speeches for opposition; he himself had made a burlesque speech for the motion, and Pitt enjoyed the idea so highly, that he insisted on his replying to the mover in the house, saying, “that by the law of parliament, nobody could be so fit to make a speech *against*, as he who had made a speech *for*; and that his only chance of escaping the charge of being a proselyte was, by being an assailant.” When the debate came on, Dundas had waited for the minister’s rising, as usual; but, to his surprise, he found that Pitt was determined to keep up the jest, and compel him, *malgré, bongré*, to speak. There was no resource; Pitt was immovable; and the festive orator, to his considerable embarrassment, was forced to lead.

But wine, if a pleasant associate, is prover-

bially a dangerous master; and an after-dinner frolic is mentioned as having nearly cost the minister his life. Returning, past midnight, with his friends to Wimbledon, from Mr. Jenkinson's, at Croydon, they found one of the turnpike gates open; and, whether from the natural pleasure of baffling a turnpike-man, or of cheating the king, the party put spurs to their horses and galloped through. Those sportive personages were no less than the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Lord Chancellor, and the Treasurer of the Navy—Pitt, Thurlow, and Dundas. The gate-keeper called after them in vain; until deciding, from their haste, and there having been rumours of robberies on the road, that they were three highwaymen, he summarily took the law into his own hands, and discharged a blunderbuss at their backs. However, their speed, or his being unaccustomed to shoot ministers flying, saved them; and they had to suffer from nothing but those “paper bullets of the brain” which Benedick so much despised. Of those they had many a volley. The Rolliad thus commemorated the adventure:—

“ Ah, think what danger on debauch attends !
Let Pitt o'er wine preach temperance to his friends,
How, as he wandered darkling o'er the plain,
His reason drowned in Jenkinson's champagne,
A rustic's hand, but righteous fate withstood,
Had shed a premier's for a robber's blood.”

But those were rare condescensions to society in the premier. From remaining unmarried, he was without an establishment; for the attempt which he made to form one, with his fantastic relative Lady Hester Stanhope at its head, soon wearied him, and he escaped from it to the easier hospitality of Mr. Dundas; whose wife, Lady Jane, was a woman of remarkable intelligence, and much valued by Pitt. His official dinners were generally left to the management of Steele, one of the secretaries of the treasury.

But with Fox all was the bright side of the picture. His extraordinary powers defied dissipation. No public man of England ever mingled so much personal pursuit of every thing in the form of indulgence with so much parliamentary activity. From the dinner he went to the debate, from the debate to the gaming-table, and returned to his bed by day-

light, freighted with parliamentary applause, plundered of his last disposable guinea, and fevered with sleeplessness and agitation, to go through the same round within the next twenty-four hours. He kept no house; but he had the houses of all his party at his disposal, and that party were the most opulent and sumptuous of the nobility. Cato and Antony were not more unlike, than the public severity of Pitt and the native and splendid dissoluteness of Fox.

They were unlike in all things. Even in such slight peculiarities as their manner of walking into the House of Commons, the contrast was visible. From the door Pitt's countenance was that of a man who felt that he was coming into his high place of business. "He advanced up the floor with a quick, firm step; with the head erect and thrown back, looking to neither the right nor the left, nor favouring with a glance or a nod any of the individuals seated on either side, among whom many of the highest would have been gratified by such a mark of recognition."* Fox's entrance was

* Wraxall.

lounging or stately, as it might happen, but always good-humoured ; he had some pleasantry to exchange with every body, and until the moment when he rose to speak, continued gaily talking with his friends.

As the royal residences were all occupied by the king, or the younger members of the royal family, the prince was forced to find a country seat for himself ; and he selected Brighton, then scarcely more than a little fishing village, and giving no conception of the sea-side London that it has since become. Our national rage for covering every spot of the land with brick, and blotting out the sky with the smoke of cities linked to cities, had not then become epidemic ; and Brighton, in all its habits, was as far removed from London as Inverness ; but its distance, not above a morning's drive for the rapid charioteering of his royal highness, made it eligible ; and at Brighton he purchased a few acres, and began to build.

Probably no man has ever begun this operation without having the prince's tale to tell. Walpole advised a man never to lay the first stone

until he had settled his children, buried his wife, and hoarded three times the amount of the estimate. There is no royal road to building; and the prince soon found, that he must undergo the common lot of all who tempt their fate with architecture.

His first work was a cottage in a field. The cottage was a pretty and picturesque little fabric, in a small piece of ground, where a few shrubs and roses shut out the road, and the eye looked unobstructed over the ocean. But visitors naturally came, and the cottage was found to be too small. The prince's household and visitors gradually increased, and there was then no resource but in a few additional apartments. It was at last found that those repeated improvements were deformities, and that their cost would be better employed in making a complete change.

From this change grew the present Pavilion; the perpetual ridicule of tourist wit; and certainly unsuited in style to its present encumbered and narrow site. But, if no man is a hero to his valet de chambre, no man is a prince to his architect. Whatever be his repugnance,

he is bound hand and foot by the dictator of taste ; is accountable for nothing, but the rashness of surrendering himself at discretion ; and has thenceforth nothing to do, but to bear the public pleasantries as patiently as he may, and consider how he shall pay his bill.

Yet the happiest hours of the prince's life were spent in this cottage. Still, it is not for men of his condition to expect the quiet of an humbler and perhaps a more fortunate situation, —the happy, honied lapse of years occupied only in cultivating the favourite tastes or the gentle affections of the human heart. He was too important to the public, in all senses of the word, to be suffered to enjoy the “*jucunda oblivia*,” which every man of common sense feels to be among his best privileges. He was too essential to the great competitors for power ; to the dependent tribe, who look upon the purse of princes as their own ; and even to the general eagerness of the populace for royal anecdote, to be left unmolested in any retreat, however remote or however secluded. His best quiet was only that of the centre of a vortex ; and he was scarcely suffered to make the experiment of

ease, when the question of the Regency led, or rather flung, him into that tumult of conflicting interests from which he was destined never to emerge.

His royal highness had joined the Foxites almost at the commencement of his public life. The captivation of Fox's manners, the freedom from restraint which he found in the society of which Fox was the idol, and the actual elegance and high life of the whig circle, were probably the chief sources of his choice. For what could be the *politics* of a handsome boy of nineteen, living in a perpetual round of entertainments, with nothing to take care of but his beauty, and with all the world saying flattering things to him, and himself saying flattering things to all the world? But, once fairly in the harness of party, the only difficulty was, to keep him from overturning the machine by his eagerness.

In the debates on the celebrated India bill, which Fox called the pyramid of the British power, but which he might more justly have called the mausoleum of his own, the Prince of Wales made himself conspicuous to a degree,

which brought down strong charges on his friends, and which certainly embarrassed North and Fox, already almost overborne by national displeasure. It was remarked, on the prince's frequent presence in the House of Commons during this perilous discussion, that “if the great personage in question, not content with merely listening to the debates, should, on any occasion, testify by his behaviour or gesticulation, while in the house, a predilection or partiality for any set of men, such marks of his preference would be unbecoming, and might operate as a means of influence.” Lord North delicately defended the practice by a panegyric on the prince's “eminent abilities,” and by expressing his personal gratification in seeing “a prince to whom the country must look up as its hope, thus practically becoming acquainted with the nature of this limited government, rather than taking up the hearsay of the hour, or looking for his knowledge to flatterers.

Fox, with his usual boldness, dashed out at once into lofty invective on the charges, as “pernicious and ridiculous alike, adopted by men no less the enemies of free discussion in that house,

than the calumniators of the motives of a distinguished personage, whose whole spirit was honour."—"Was," said he "the mind which might, at any hour, by the common chances of mortality, be summoned to the highest duties allotted to man, to be left to learn them by accident? Was he to be sent to discover the living spirit of the constitution in the dust of libraries, or in the unintelligible compilations of black-letter law; or to receive it from the authority of the politicians, *pious* or otherwise, who had doled out doctrines to the house, which the house and the country, he believed, had heard with equal astonishment, however popular they might be in the inquisition, or perhaps in the conventicle? For his part, he rejoiced to see that distinguished personage disdaining to use the privileges of his rank, and keep aloof from the debates of that house. He rejoiced to see him manfully coming among them, to imbibe a knowledge of the constitution within the walls of the commons of England. He, for his part, saw nothing in the circumstances which had called down so much volunteer eloquence and

unnecessary reprobation, but a ground for praise, an evidence of the British mind of that high personage, and a practical pledge to the free institutions of the country."

The member alluded to as the conventicle orator was Sir Richard Hill, (brother of the preacher;) who had indulged himself in the foolish and indecorous habit of introducing Scripture phraseology into his speeches,—a habit by which, without increasing any man's respect for the Scriptures, he naturally brought his own oratory into constant ridicule. Sir Richard was often thus more troublesome to his friends than to his enemies. One evening, in contrasting Pitt's influence at St. James's with Fox's full-blown power in the house, he burst upon the astonished audience with the information, that "the honest Israelite, Mordecai, repaired privately to court, and averted the danger which threatened the people from Haman's ambition; who, being driven from the *cabinet*, was finally suspended from a gibbet."

The comparison with the *Israelite*, intended as a matchless compliment to Pitt, was received

by him without a smile ; and he was probably the only man in the house whose countenance did not wear one.

The Rolliad, which spared none on the ministerial side, naturally delighted in such a victim,—

“ Brother of Rowland ! or, if yet more dear
Sounds thy new title, cousin of a peer ;
Scholar of various learning, good and evil,
Alike what Heaven inspired, and what the devil ;
Speaker well skilled, what no man reads to write,
Sleep-giving poet of a sleepless night ;
Polemic, politician, saint, and wit,
Now lashing Madan, now defending Pitt ;
Thy praise shall live till time itself be o'er,
‘ Friend of King George, but of King Jesus more.’ ”

The last line was verbally one of Sir Richard's declarations. The critical knife was again plunged deep :—

* * * * *

“ His reverend jokes see pious Richard cut.
Let meaner talents from the Bible draw
Their faith, their morals these, and those their law.
His lively genius finds in holy writ
A richer mine of unsuspected wit ;
What never Jew, what never Christian taught,
What never fired one sectary's heated thought,
What not even Rowland dreamed, he saw alone,

And to the wondering senate first made known
How bright o'er mortal jokes the Scriptures shine."

* * * * *

To Fox the prince's connexion was a tower of strength; for it partially discountenanced the rumours, that in his fall he had abandoned more than place, and was embittered not only against his successful antagonists, but against the laws and the throne. As Pope replied to Prince Frederic, on being asked, "how he contrived to feel so much regard for princes, and so little for kings," that "he was afraid of the full-grown lion, but could play with it before its teeth and claws were come;" Fox might have liked, or loved, the heir of the monarchy, however indignant at the grasp of the monarch himself. But his association with the prince may have done even more than assisted his public name. In the proverbial madness of ambition, the contumacious temper of the time, and the angry workings of utter defeat upon a powerful and impassioned mind, there was formidable temptation to the great demagogue.

Too generous and too lofty in his habits to

stoop to vulgar conspiracy; perhaps, alike too abhorrent of blood, and too fond of his ease, to have exhibited the reckless vigour, or endured the long anxieties, or wrapt up his mystery in the profound concealment of a Catiline, he had all the qualities that might have made a Caius Gracchus—the eloquence, the ingenuousness of manner, the republican simplicity of life, and the shewy and specious zeal of popularity in all its forms. Fox would have made the first of tribunes. He unquestionably possessed the means, at that period, to have become the most dangerous subject of England.

Fox's life is a memorable lesson to the pride of talents. With every kind of public ability, every kind of public opportunity, and an unceasing and indefatigable determination to be at the summit in all things, his whole life was a succession of disappointments. It has been said, that, on commencing his parliamentary course, he declared that there were three objects of his ambition, and that he would attain them all:—that he should be the most popular man in England, the husband of the handsomest woman, and prime minister! He *did* attain

them all; but in what diminished and illusory degree; how the “juggling fiend kept the promise to the ear, and broke it to the hope,” is long since known. He was the most popular man in England, if the Westminster electors were the nation; his marriage secured him beauty, if it secured him nothing else; and his premiership lasted just long enough for him to appear at the levee. In a life of fifty-eight years, Fox’s whole existence as a cabinet minister was but nineteen months; while Pitt, ten years his junior, and dying at forty-seven, passed almost his whole life, from his entrance into parliament, at the head of the country.

The public and parliamentary language of the time was contemptuous of all government. Junius had set the example, by insulting, not only the throne, but the personal feelings of the sitter on the throne. Going beyond the audacity of Cromwell, who desperately declared that, “if he saw the king opposite to him in the field, he would fire his carbine into his bosom as soon as into any other man’s,” Junius adopted the joint atrocity and insolence of Horne Tooke, who had declared, that “he would fire

it into the king's bosom *sooner* than into any other man's." English libel had, till then, assailed only the public life of royalty; Junius was the subtle traitor who dropped poison into the cup at its table. The ability of the writer is undoubted; but its uses deprive it of all the higher admiration due to the exercise of ability in an honest cause. The remorseless and malignant venom of this political serpent destroys all our praise of its force and beauty. While the school of Junius continued to be the model of English political writing, a ceaseless perversion was festering the public sense of truth, justice, and honour.

'Perhaps the safety of the constitution at that hour was owing to that personal character on which the whole host of libel turned all their artillery. A king jealous of his authority would have haughtily avenged it by a stretch of his power; a vindictive king would have fiercely torn away the covering from his libellers, and in lashing them have hazarded blows at higher interests; an ambitious king would have grasped at the opportunity always offered by popular licence to royal aggression, have raised against

the mob barriers from which he might afterwards menace the nation ; and have more than retaliated as a tyrant, all that he had suffered as a victim.

But George the Third confided his quarrel to his virtues ; he saw deeper than the ostentatious sagacity of those declaimers, into the true character of the people ; he knew that those “yeasty waves” of sedition were passing and superficial things ; that the time must come when the depth and breadth of the public mind would find its level, and be open to the light ; and in pious and manly resignation he awaited his time.

The failure of the American war finally concentrated upon the king the whole weight of party obloquy. Lord North, terrified at his own responsibility, instead of standing before the throne, flung himself at its feet, and exhibited the repulsive spectacle of a first minister without resource in himself or in his friends ; first exhausting the royal means by his struggle for power, and then encumbering the royal person by his weakness. But if we must disdain the clamour of party for the cause of America,

with what feeling shall we listen to the language of the great senatorial authorities for its loss? History never gave a sterner rebuke to political foresight. "What," said Lord Chatham, in the famous speech which he almost died uttering; "what is to be the compensation for the thirteen colonies? Where are we to look for it? I never will consent to deprive the royal offspring of the House of Brunswick of their fairest inheritance. Where is the man who *dares* advise such a measure?" With this statesman the loss was fatal.

The sentiment branded itself on the reputation of all the leading public men.

"When I hear," said Lord George Germaine, "the topic of abandoning the colonies calmly proposed, I own my astonishment; I own that I cannot comprehend the proposal; I see in it only national ruin. I own I have not that philosophic equanimity, that more than political nerve, which can contemplate without shuddering the opening of a gulf into which all that is valuable in the British empire must inevitably be merged. I must pause, I must tremble, when I stand on its edge; for it is my firm belief, that from the moment of acknowledg-

ing the independence of America, England is ruined."

Lord Shelburne, a minister not celebrated for rashly giving way to his feelings, exceeded, if possible, the melancholy prophecies of Chat-ham and Germaine. Even when first lord of the treasury,* and with all the restrictions of official speech, he could glow on this subject, and ominously pronounce, that,—“in whatever year, in whatever hour, the British parliament should lose the sovereignty of the thirteen colonies, *the sun of England's glory was for ever set.* He had hoped that there would be some reserve for national safety, if not for national honour; that a spark at least would be left, which might light us up in time to a new day. But if independence were once conceded, if parliament considered that measure to be advisable, he, for his part, must avow his belief; he foresaw, in his own mind, that *England was undone!*”

Such was the wisdom of the wise; or rather, such was at once the blindness, which could not see that the growing patronage of the colonies

* April, 1778.

might speedily have given a designing minister a power deadly to a free constitution; that colonies, which in our negligence we had suffered to be filled with every shape of religious schism, the inevitable parent of every shape of political discontent, were a dominion which no authority three thousand miles off could safely administer; and that their whole speculation exhibited only the narrow and ungrateful disregard of those immeasurable means of strength, happiness, and national stability which Providence has lavished on Great Britain. Such is the caution with which men of public weight should form their judgments. The headlong language of those powerful men degraded their wisdom; it did more, it endangered their country. Who can be surprised that opinions thus inculcated by the gravest names of politic council, voices that came like oracles, should have sunk deep into the popular bosom? A bitter repugnance to every act of the throne was rapidly engendered, thoughts of a general change began to be familiar, and the language of the principal members of opposition

assumed a tone, at whose violence we can now only wonder. Dunning, though a lawyer, and at an age not likely to be inflamed by enthusiasm; the keen, cold man of jurisprudence, actually moved, in the House of Commons, that the power of dissolving parliament should be taken from the crown; his motion being, that* “the parliament should not be dissolved, nor the session prorogued, until proper measures were adopted for diminishing the influence of the crown, and correcting the other evils complained of in the petitions.” Fox carried his extravagances still further; and coming hot from the contact of the Corresponding Society, and full of the popular grievance of seeing a body of soldiers placed to protect the members of the house from insult; unhesitatingly declared, that “if the soldiery were to be thus let loose on the assemblages of the people, the people who attended them *must go armed.*” Mirabeau’s rebel declaration in the national assembly, that, “if the king desired the French deputies to retire, it

* April, 1780.

must be at the point of the bayonet," the watch-word of the republic, was scarcely more defying than this insolent menace to the constitution.

But the better genius of England prevailed. The empire shrank from the hideous worship of the devil of revolution. Even Fox soon felt himself reluctant to pass at once from the princely banquet to the obscene riot of the democratic carousal. He grew weary alike of the furious fondness and the irrational hate of the populace ; his angry temperament cooled, his natural tastes were restored, and long before the close of his life, Fox was, what he had begun, the high aristocrat by habit, by association, and by nature. He still continued member for Westminster, and he paid its penalty, in his periodic humiliations. But if he wore the robes of the worship, he abandoned the fanaticism ; he no longer menaced the institutions of England with the fierce fervour of his old prophecies of evil ; he no more shook against the throne the brand snatched from the revolutionary altar ; he no longer poured out his mad libation to the " sovereignty of the people." If he still went through the established ceremonial ; the mo-

ment it was done, he cast aside the tarnished vestments, and hastened to be the companion of nobles and princes again.

The society at the Pavilion was remarkably attractive. No prince in Europe passed so much of his time in society expressly chosen by himself. Intelligent conversation is the great charm of man ; the simplest, yet most effectual and delightful, mode of at once resting and invigorating the mind, whether wearied by study or depressed by fortune. Next to the power of extensive benevolence, there is no privilege of princes which humbler life may be so much justified in desiring, as their power of collecting accomplished minds from the whole range of the community. The Prince of Wales availed himself largely of this privilege. It happened that English society at this period singularly abounded with men of conspicuous ability. To his royal highness, of course, all were accessible ; and though his associates were chiefly men of rank or of high political name, yet talents, grace of manners, and conversational brilliancy, were still the principle of selection.

Frederic the Great had attempted to draw round him a circle of this kind. But he chose ill; for he chose dependents, and those Frenchmen. His own habits were querulous and supercilious; and as the fashions of royalty are quickly adopted by its associates, Frederic's *coterie* was in a state of perpetual warfare. No man in a state of perfect idleness can be satisfied with his life; and the Frenchmen, at length, had nothing to do but to quarrel, invent royal scandals, and yawn.

Thiebault, one of the chosen dwellers in the paradise of Sans Souci, tells us, that their only occupation from morning till night was conjugating the verb *s'ennuyer*, through all persons, moods, and tenses. Frederic treated them like monkeys in a cage; came in from the council or the parade to amuse himself for the half-hour with looking at their tricks and their visages; then turned on his heel, left them to the eternal weariness of their prison, and went about the business of the world. The Frenchmen at last slipped, one by one, out of this gilded menagerie; ran off to Paris, the only spot where a Frenchman can live; and libelled

the royal wit and infidel with a pungency and a profligacy even superior to his own—the whole fruit of the experiment being, that they turned the “Grand Frederic” into a public laugh in every corner of Europe beyond the lash of his drum-majors.

Frederic, Prince of Wales, the grandfather of his late majesty, had also attempted to collect a familiar and literary society round him. But the attempt was a reluctant one, and it naturally failed. It had been Lyttleton’s suggestion as a source of popularity; and it humiliated Thomson and Mallet, by making them pensioners on an individual. Authorship, to be worthy of public honour, cannot shrink too sensitively from personal protection. The past age scandalized the natural rank of genius. But a wiser, because a more dignified, feeling now prevails among men of literary name. They appeal only to the public, and honourably disdain to stoop to the degradation of any patronage, below that of the country and the throne.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PRINCE'S FRIENDS.

THE prince's table afforded the display of men too independent by both their place in society, and their consciousness of intellectual power, to feel themselves embarrassed by the presence of superior rank. Hare, Jekyll, Fitzpatrick, Erskine, with the great parliamentary leaders, were constant guests; and the round was varied by the introduction of celebrated foreigners, and other persons capable of adding to the interest of the circle.

Hare, "the Hare and many friends," as he was called by the clever Duchess of Gordon, in allusion to Gay's fable, and his own universal favouritism; was then at the head of conversational fame. Like Johnson's objection to

Topham Beauclerk; “Sir, a man cannot dine with him and preserve his self-applause; Sir, no man who gives a dinner should so overwhelm his guests;” Hare’s chief fault was even said to be his superabundant pleasantry; a talent which suffered nothing among his friends or enemies to escape, yet which had the rare good fortune of being pointed without ceasing to be playful.

Some of the sayings of the circle are still remembered. But if they are given here in the miscellaneous and accidental order of their transpiring in the chances of society, it is by no means without a sufficient feeling, that the repetition of a *bon-mot* can seldom give more than a proof of the fading nature of pleasantry. In wit, the manner is always much, sometimes all. The promptness of the idea, the circumstances, the company, even the countenance, are essential to its poignancy. But the revived pleasantry is a portrait drawn from the dust, the originals of whose features have passed away—the amusement of a masquerade, when we have nothing of the masquerade left but the mask and the robe. If actors “come like

shadows, so depart," the fame of wits is so much more fugitive; that it is scarcely paradoxical to say, that the security of their fame depends on the speed of our consigning all its specimens to oblivion. Selwyn was the wit *par excellence* of his day, and so paramount, that he turns even Horace Walpole into a worshipper—Walpole, himself a wit, and as full of the keenest venom, and the smallest ambition, as any man who ever prostrated himself to a court, and libelled it. Yet Selwyn's best sayings are now remarkable for scarcely more than their stiffness, their sulkiness, or their want of decorum. They are stamped with bald, dry antiquity; and seem perfectly worthy of the fate which has, a second time in our age, sent the skeleton to the grave.

The merit of Hare's *jeux-d'esprit* was their readiness and their oddity.—Fox, after the fall of the Coalition, coming to dinner at the Pavilion just as he had returned from London, and apologizing for appearing in his *dishabille*, and without powder,—

“ Oh,” said Hare, “ make no apology; our

great guns are *discharged*, and now we may all do without *powder*."

"Pleasant news, this, from America," said he, meeting General Fitzpatrick on the first intelligence of Burgoyne's defeat. The general doubted, and replied, "that he had just come from the secretary-of-state's office without hearing anything of it." "Perhaps so," said Hare, "but take it from me as a *flying* rumour."

Fox's negligence of his fortune had induced his friends to look for a wife for him among the great heiresses. Miss Pulteney, afterwards Countess of Bath, was fixed upon; and Fox, though probably without any peculiar inclination to the match, paid his court for a while. A seat was frequently left for him beside the lady, and he made his attentions rather conspicuous during Hastings' trial. Some one observed to Hare the odd contrast between Fox's singularly dark complexion, and Miss Pulteney's pale face and light hair. "What a strange sort of children they will make," was

the observation. “Why, *duns*, to be sure,” replied Hare; “cream-coloured bodies with black manes and tails.”

Fox was more celebrated for fulness of conversation, for the outpouring of an abundant mind, than for piquancy of phrase. His animation was unequal, and there were periods when a stranger might have pronounced him even taciturn. But those times were generally brief; a sudden influx of ideas would seem to fertilize his mind, and he then overbore everything by the richness and variety of his conceptions. Yet the chief remembrances of Fox in private society are some little poems, thrown off with the carelessness of the moment, and deriving their principal value from his name.

The Duchess of Devonshire once applied to him for a charade. “On what subject?” said Fox. “The happiest of all subjects—myself,” was the laughing reply. Fox took his pencil, and on the back of a letter wrote the lines, so often since made the property of wits and lovers in distress:

My *first* is myself in a very short word,
My *second*'s a plaything,
And *you* are my *third*. *Idol.*

His lines on the Rose are pretty and pathetic :

The rose, the sweetly-blooming rose,
Ere from the tree 'tis torn,
Is like the charm which beauty shews
In life's exulting morn.

But ah ! how soon its sweets are gone,
The rose-bud withering lies ;
So, long ere life's pale eve comes on,
The flower of beauty dies.

But, since the fairest heaven e'er made
Soon withering we shall find,
Be thine, sweet girl, what ne'er shall fade,
The *beauties* of the *mind*.

The well-known lines on Poverty, and on Mrs. Crewe, are of a higher order. But all those things are trifles which might be produced by any pen, and which can be given only as instances of the occasional lightness of a grave and powerful mind. Fox's triumphs were all parliamentary. But his conversation, when he was "i' the vein," is always spoken of

as leaving us only to regret that so little of it is recoverable.

One evening, at Devonshire House, some remark happening to be made on the skill of the French in emblems, the duchess playfully said, “that it would be impossible to find an emblem for *her*.” Several attempts were made with various success. The duchess still declared herself dissatisfied. At length Fox took up a cluster of grapes and presented it to her, with the motto, “*Je plais jusqu'à l'ivresse* ;” his superiority was acknowledged by acclamation.

Burke was contending, in his usual enthusiastic manner, for the possibility of raising Italy to her former rank ; and instanced, that several nations which had sunk under the sword had risen again. Fox argued, that her ruin was irretrievable, and that the very tardiness and tranquillity of her decay made restoration hopeless. “The man,” said he, “who breaks his bones by being flung from a precipice may have them mended by his surgeon ;

but what hope is there, when they have dissolved away in the grave?"

A high official personage, since dead, notorious for his parsimony, and peculiarly for his reluctance to contribute to charitable institutions, was seen at a charity sermon for some school, in which Fox and Sheridan were accidentally interested. How far the sermon had acted on this noble person's liberality became a question over the table. "He gave his pound," said Fox. "Impossible!" said Sheridan, "the rack could not have forced such a sum from him." "But I *saw* him give it," said Fox. "Yes, and I saw him too, but I did not believe it," said Sheridan.

Gibbon, one of the most fastidious of men, and disposed by neither party nor personal recollections to be enamoured of Fox, describes his conversation as admirable. They met at Lausanne, spent a whole day without other company, "and talked the whole day." The test was sufficiently long, under any circumstances; but Gibbon declares that Fox never

flagged; his animation and variety of topic were inexhaustible.

Major Doyle, the late Gen. Sir John Doyle, who, after a course of renown in the field and the senate, continued the life of his circle, and abounded to the last in the spirit and pleasantry of his early years, was, for a long period, private secretary to the prince. The choice had nothing to do with politics or English connexions, for Doyle was an Irishman and a stranger, or known only by his character for wit and eloquence in the Irish parliament, where he had attained a high rank in the opposition. The prince met him in the crowd of an enormous London rout, was struck with his gay intelligence, and invited him at the moment to accompany a large party who were going to spend the week at the Pavilion. There the first impression was so fully confirmed, that he offered him the private secretaryship, and Doyle was thenceforth one of the stars of the Brighton galaxy. It was an honour to this distinguished gentleman and soldier, that neither time nor circumstance had worn away his feelings for

his royal friend; to whom, on all occasions, he unequivocally and eloquently gave the tribute of having been one of the most attractive and accomplished men whom he ever met, in the range of a life spent in the best society of Europe; as the most open-hearted of human beings, during the entire period of their intercourse; as possessing a remarkable degree of knowledge, even on military subjects; and, on the whole, as gifted with acquirements and abilities, which, if the field for their exertion had been opened at the commencement of his public life, must have placed the Prince of Wales among the most popular individuals who ever inherited the British throne.

The charges of those sudden checks to familiarity which have been subsequently laid against him; if they were not founded more in the angry presumption of those who made them, than the caprice of him who might have had no other means of repulsing unworthy society; seem to have had no existence at this period. The table was free and equal; the prince enjoyed his jest, and bore its reply; and perhaps at no table in England was there more

ease, liveliness, or freedom from the royal frown that looks subjects into silence, than in the cottage of the future king.

On the king's opening the session of parliament, the prince had gone in state, a military uniform with diamond epaulettes. At dinner Doyle came in late, and, to the prince's inquiry, "whether he had seen the procession?" answered, "that he had been among the mob, who prodigiously admired his royal highness's equipage." "And did they say nothing else?" asked the prince, who was at this time a good deal talked of, from his embarrassments.

"Yes. One fellow, looking at your epaulette, said, 'Tom, what an amazing fine thing the prince has got on his shoulders!' 'Ay,' answered the other, 'fine enough, and fine as it is, it will soon be *on our shoulders.*'" The prince paused a moment, then looked Doyle in the face, and laughing, said, "Ah! I know where that hit came from, you rogue; that could be nobody's but yours. Come, take some wine."

Curran, the celebrated Irish barrister, was a

frequent guest at the Pavilion, and all his recollections of it were panegyrical. He said, and that at a time when his intercourse with courts, and nearly with life, was at an end; that, considered as a test of colloquial liveliness and wit, he had never met anything superior to the prince's table, and that the prince himself was among the very first there; that he had never met any man who kept him more on the *qui vive*; and “that if his own habits might have given him a little more practice, the prince ‘fairly kept up at saddle-skirts with him.’”

Among the adventures to which the prince's unrestricted style of life exposed him, he was once robbed; not by his friends, or his household, for that seems to have been the daily occurrence with, at least, the lower ranks of both; but by those professional collectors of the streets who, fifty years ago, made a midnight walk in London as perilous as a journey in Arabia. The prince and the Duke of York had remained till a late hour at one of the St. James's Street clubs, where the duke had played, and, by an unusual fortune with that honest and open cha-

racter, had won a considerable sum. The royal brothers got into a hackney coach, and were driving down Hayhill, when the coach was suddenly stopped, the doors were thrown back, and the robbers, masked, presented their pistols. Resistance would have been idle. But the prince had a diamond watch of great value, which he cleverly slipped under the cushion, and thus saved: the duke was obliged to refund all his winnings; and the robbers were so well satisfied with their prize, that they forgot the prince's purse, closed the doors, and wished them a good night. The coach had evidently been followed from the club-house, and, it was strongly suspected, by some of the gamesters themselves.

The leading barristers, Erskine, Adam, Ponsonby, Curran, and others, were frequent guests at the Pavilion. The society of those accomplished men speaks not slightly for the intellect that could have enjoyed their company; and innumerable anecdotes might be told of their intercourse.

Erskine, always animated, full of conversation, and sportive, was then in the flower of his

fame. Led by his original propensities to take the side of the whigs, and personally attracted by Fox, Erskine had embraced party with a vividness natural to his character, and a sincerity new to his profession. No man, within memory, had so rapidly mastered the difficulties of rising at the bar. His singular eloquence, boldness, and fervour, broke down the barriers of that most jealous and repulsive of all professions; and, from the moment of his appearing, he was visibly marked for the highest success. He less solicited popularity, than was carried on its shoulders up to fame and fortune. The Dean of St. Asaph's case, the trials of Keppel, Hardy, and a succession of others, made him the idol at once of the people and the bar. By the power given to genius alone, of impressing its own immortality on all that it touches; he turned the dry details of law into great intellectual and historic records, exalted the concerns of private individuals into monuments of national freedom; and raised, on common and temporary topics, some of the richest trophies of forensic eloquence in any age or nation.

Erskine, by the result of those extraordinary

displays, was a benefactor to the whole state—to the crown, the government, and the people. The times were disturbed, in both the earlier and later periods of those great orations. In the former, the people were agitated by fears of the crown; in the latter, the crown was made jealous by fears of the people; prerogative in the one instance, and revolution in the other, were the terrors on both sides. The success of Erskine's eloquent appeals to the law relieved both,—he shewed the people that they had a sure defence in the last extremity; and by thus quieting their alarms, he gradually quieted the alarms of the crown. By exalting the law, he gave both king and people a common security. He proved that revolutionary principles were but on the surface, that the depths of the soil were of the same ancient and generous mould, and that the worst evil of the day was but the admixture of a few weeds foreign to the clime, and certain to be soon over-grown and extinguished by the native loyalty of England.

With the usual fate of lawyers, Erskine added nothing to his legal distinctions by his appearance in parliament. Locke, in his chapter on

the association of ideas, speaks of a man who, having learned to dance in a chamber where his trunk lay, could never afterwards dance where that trunk was not present to inspire his agility. Something of this fetter, perhaps, clings to all men long accustomed to an effort, mental or bodily, in a peculiar place. The barrister, divested of the array of judge, jury, counsel, and constables, often loses the sources of his oratory ; the props of his invention are stricken from under him ; the spring-wells of his fancy are dried up ; the landscape, adust as it is, on which his eye fixed with the delight of a life of litigation, inspires his periods no more. He is the Arab of the desert ; his hand may be against every man, and every man's hand against his : but he must have the desert for his display : and thrown into the “populous ways of men,” the prince of plunderers is strange and helpless, a fugitive or a mendicant. Curran, the readiest and most versatile of human beings, a man whom it would seem impossible to embarrass by circumstances, pathetically declared, that “without his wig he was nothing.” He pronounced that he felt not merely his barristerial physiognomy diminished,

but his brains ; he acknowledged the hand of another Dalilah upon him, the extinction of his faculties following the shorn honours of his brow. In this humorous spirit, once, when the Dublin barristers were compelled to appear without their wigs in court, the chamber where they were kept being overflowed by the river, Curran, opening a cause, began, “ My lord, and gentlemen of the jury, the counsel for the plaintiff is —what *remains* of me.”

But Erskine, like many other characters of peculiar liveliness, had a morbid sensibility to the circumstances of the moment, which sometimes strangely enfeebled his presence of mind. Any appearance of neglect in his audience, a cough, a yawn, or a whisper ; even among the mixed multitude of the courts, and strong as he was there ; has been known to dishearten him visibly. This trait was even so notorious, that a solicitor, whose only merit was a remarkably vacant face, was said to have been often planted opposite to Erskine by the adverse party, to yawn when the advocate began.

The cause of his first failure in the house was not unlike this curious mode of discon-

certing an orator. He had been brought forward to support the falling fortunes of Fox, then struggling under the weight of the "coalition." The "India Bill" had heaped the king's almost open hostility on the accumulation of public wrath and grievance which the ministers had with such luckless industry been employed during the year in raising for their own ruin. Fox looked abroad for help; and Gordon, the member for Portsmouth, was displaced from his borough; and Erskine was brought into the house, with no slight triumph of his party, and perhaps some degree of anxiety on the opposite side. On the night of his first speech, Pitt, evidently intending to reply, sat with pen and paper in his hand, prepared to catch the arguments of this formidable adversary. He took a note or two, as Erskine proceeded; but with every additional sentence Pitt's attention to the paper relaxed, his look became more careless, and he obviously began to think the orator less and less worthy of his attention. At length, while every eye in the house was fixed upon him, he, with a contemptuous smile, dashed the pen through the paper, and flung it on the

floor. Erskine never recovered from this expression of disdain ; his voice faltered, he struggled through the remainder of his speech, and sank into his seat, dispirited and shorn of his fame.

But a mind of the saliency and variety of Erskine's must have distinguished itself wherever it was determined on distinction ; and it is impossible to believe, that the master of the grave, deeply-reasoned, and glowing eloquence of this great pleader, should not have been able to bring his gifts with him from Westminster-hall to the higher altar of parliament. There were, consequently, times when his efforts in the house remind us of his finest effusions at the bar. Yet those were rare. He obviously felt that his place was not in the legislature ; that no man can wisely hope for more than one kind of eminence ; and except upon some party emergency, he seldom spoke, and probably never with much expectation of public effect. His later years lowered his name. By his retirement from active life he lost the habits forced upon him by professional and public rank ; and thenceforth he wandered through society, to the close of his

days; a pleasant idler; still the gentleman and the man of easy wit, but leaving society to wonder what had become of the great orator, in what corner of the brain of this man of careless conduct and rambling conversation had shrunk the glorious faculty which, in better days, flashed with such force and brightness; what cloud had absorbed the lightnings which had once alike penetrated, and illumined, the heart of the British nation.

Erskine's well-known habit of talking of himself often brought the jest of the table upon him. He was thus once panegyrising his own humanity: "There," said he, "for instance, is my dog; I wish it to be happy in this life, I wish it to be happy in the other. Like the Indian, I wish that wherever I may go, my faithful dog shall bear me company." "And a confoundedly *unlucky dog* he would be," murmured Jekyll.

All the London world was amused by Mingay's retort on Erskine, in one of those fits of laudation. The trial was on some trivial question of a patent for a shoe-buckle. Erskine held up

the buckle to the jury, and harangued on “the extraordinary ingenuity of an invention which would have astonished and delighted past ages. How would my ancestors,” added he, “have looked upon this specimen of dexterity?” From this point he started into a panegyric on his fore-fathers. Mingay was counsel for the opposite side; and concluded his speech with,—“Gentlemen, you have heard a good deal to-day of my learned friend’s ancestors, and of their probable astonishment at his shoe-buckle; but, gentlemen, I can assure you, their astonishment would have been quite as great at his *shoes and stockings.*”

The conversation at the Pavilion once turned on the choice of professions. After a variety of opinions in favour of the church, the army, and the other leading pursuits; Erskine pronounced for the bar, as “conducting to surer public distinctions than any other;” rather loftily adding, that “it was fitter for combining with *noble* blood than any of them, the army excepted.” The allusion to his own noble descent was obvious; and Curran, on being

asked his sentiments, poignantly said, “that *he* had not the same reasons for cherishing the bar: he had brought to it no hereditary honours to foster; he had no infusion of noble blood to pour into it; but he believed that as much money, and as much vexation, could be earned in it as in any other profession.—For one thing, however,” he added, with the skill of a courtier, “I must feel indebted to the bar, and that is, its having raised me from an humble origin into the society of persons of the highest merit, and introduced the son of a peasant to the friendship of his prince.”

Curran and Erskine had frequent opportunities of meeting, and must have looked on each other’s powers with respect. But the notorious foible of the English barrister sometimes shook the Irishman’s philosophy. Grattan’s name was once casually mentioned; and Erskine asked, “what he said of himself.” “Said of himself!” was Curran’s astonished interjection; “nothing.—Grattan speak of himself! Why, sir, Harry Grattan is a great man; sir, the torture could not wring a syllable of self-praise from Grattan,

—a team of six horses could not drag an opinion of himself out of him. Like all great men, he knows the strength of his reputation, and will never condescend to proclaim its march like the trumpeter of a puppet-show. —Sir, Grattan stands on a national altar, and it is the business of us inferior men to keep up the fire and the incense. You will never see *him* stooping to do either the one or the other."

This sally may have been stimulated in some degree by one of those fits of irritability to which Curran was liable; but no man could be more entitled to the praise than the speaker himself. Of course, every man of vigorous faculties knows his own powers, and knows them better than the world can. But no popular applause, and he was its idol; no homage of his profession, and he was the acknowledged meteor of the Irish bar; and no admiration of private society, and he was the delight of the table; could ever betray Curran into the weakness of self-praise.

It may justly be supposed, that when he was thus scrupulous in his own instance, he demanded

no less reserve from others. When Lord Byron rose into fame, Curran objected to his constantly writing of himself; as the great drawback on his poetry.

“Any subject,” said he, but “that eternal one of self. I am weary of knowing once a month the state of any man’s hopes or fears, rights or wrongs. I should as soon read a register of the weather,—the barometer up so many inches to-day and down so many inches to-morrow. I feel scepticism all over me at the sight of agonies on paper, when those are agonies that come as regular and as notorious as the full of the moon. The truth is, his lordship *weeps for the press, and wipes his eyes with the public.*”

Curran, even when he found all the objects of his ambition broken up, and himself placed in an unsuitable and uncongenial office, while his whole party were enjoying the rewards of political success; fixing him, as he characteristically said, “in a garret-window to see the procession go by below,” rather laughed at his mischance, than contrasted it with his ability. His services were matter of public record, and

to those he appealed boldly ; but his talents he left to be judged of by his countrymen ; and to be rivalled, if they could, by the ablest of a party which had betrayed and defrauded the most brilliant mind of Ireland.

An occasional guest at Brighton, and a sufficiently singular one, was the Irish Franciscan, Arthur O'Leary ; a man of strong faculties and considerable knowledge. His first celebrity was gained as a pamphleteer, in a long battle with Woodward, the able bishop of Cloyne, in Ireland, on questions of the establishment ; in which the Friar generally contrived to have what a Frenchman would reckon as victory, *les rieurs de son côté*.—One of his retorts to the bishop's arguments against purgatory was a recommendation, that “ his lordship would be content to stop *there*, for he might *go further and fare worse*.”

O'Leary abounded in Irish anecdote, and was a master of peasant humour, rude enough, but novel and characteristic. His chief claim, however, was, that he was no unskilful medium of intercourse between his church and the

whigs; and contributed in no slight degree to the popularity of the prince in Ireland.

Curran once professed, that he kept up his acquaintance with O'Leary in the hope that, as St. Francis occasionally holds the keys of paradise, he might let him in. "Better for you," was the reply, "that he should keep the keys of the other place, that he might let *you out*."

An officer of remarkable stature was complaining at the prince's table of the neglect of some memorial at the Horse-guards. O'Leary consoled him by observing, that "no gentleman *stood higher* in the opinion of his friends, and no man could *look down* on him, at the Horse-guards or elsewhere."

Another Irishman, introduced at this period to the prince, was a memorable instance of the power of fortune. This was O'Beirne, afterwards bishop of Meath, in Ireland. He had been educated at St. Omer's for the Roman-catholic priesthood. Returning to his college from a visit to his friends in Ireland, he happened to arrive one evening at the inn of an

English village, so humble, that its whole stock of provisions was but one shoulder of mutton ; which he immediately ordered for dinner. While it was preparing, a post-chaise with two gentlemen stopped to change horses ; the roasting shoulder of mutton attracted their appetites ; they had travelled some distance, felt weary, and agreed that the next half-hour could not be better spent than in dining on what they could get.

But a new difficulty now arose, on their being told that the only dinner in the house belonged to a “young Irish gentleman above stairs.” The travellers were at first perplexed ; but after a little consultation, agreed with the landlady’s idea, that the shoulder should be theirs ; but that, to save the credit of her house, the young Irishman should be invited to partake of it. She was despatched as ambassadress ; but returned, after an ineffectual attempt at persuasion, announcing, that “the young gentleman was not to be persuaded ; but, on the contrary, protested that no two travellers, nor any ten on earth, should deprive him of his dinner.” This menacing message, however, was followed by

the appearance of O'Beirne himself, good-humouredly saying, that though he could not relinquish the shoulder of mutton to any body, yet “if they would partake of it with him, he would be happy to have their company at dinner.”

The proposal was pleasantly made, and pleasantly accepted. The party sat down; the bottle went round; none of the three was deficient in topics; and before the evening closed, the travellers were so much struck with the appearance and manners of their entertainer, then a very handsome young man, and always a very quick, anecdotal, and intelligent one, that they asked him, “What he meant to do with himself in the world?” He told his story. His destination for the Irish priesthood was immediately set down as altogether inferior to the prospects which might lie before his abilities in English life. On parting, the travellers gave him their cards, and desired him to call on them on his arrival in London. We may judge of his surprise, when he found that his guests were no less than Charles Fox and the Duke of Portland!

Such an invitation was not likely to be declined. His two distinguished friends kept their promise honourably ; and in a short period O'Beirne enjoyed all the advantages of the first society of the empire. What his graceful appearance and manners gained in the first instance, was kept by his literary acquirements and the usefulness of his services. He was for a considerable period on a confidential footing in the Duke of Portland's family, and much employed in the party negotiations of the time. Among his lighter labours were two dramas from the French, which he assisted the Duchess of Devonshire in translating and adapting for the stage ; and of whose failure, for they seem to have been blown away by a tornado of criticism, the assistant gallantly bore the blame. But he had now securely anchored himself in prosperity, and “neither domestic treason nor foreign levy,” neither the check of a negotiation nor the overthrow of a drama, could shake him. On Howe's conciliatory mission to America, O'Beirne was sent with him as chaplain, and in some measure as secretary. The mission was flung into utter scorn by the Americans, as

every one predicted that it would be ; but the chaplain preached a famous sermon at New York, and brought home the only laurels of the embassy.

On Lord Fitzwilliam's fatal appointment to the viceroyalty of Ireland, O'Beirne accompanied him, as first chaplain and private secretary, with the usual promise of the first mitre. The viceroyalty lasted but six months ; yet six months which were long enough to lay the foundations of a rebellion. The alternate feebleness and violence of this brief government, of whose results the noble viceroy was probably as uncalculating as the babe unborn, made the recall one of imperious necessity. Yet O'Beirne, escaped from the wreck, floated when all was going down round him, and had scarcely re-appeared in London when he was raised to the peerage, and the opulent bishopric of Meath, valued at 8000*l.* a-year.

Whether this accession of rank and wealth added equally to his happiness is a graver question. It may well be presumed, that they were not gained without envy, nor, at such a time, held without attack. His change of re-

ligion, though at an early period of life, and on conviction; was not forgotten by his fellow-students at St. Omer's, who were now scattered through Ireland as priests. His political connexions, too, were at an end; their debt had been paid; and except a solitary letter from the Duke of Portland, his English intercourse was nearly closed. The party fiercenesses of Ireland are always bitter in the degree of their unimportance; their patriotism tears the country with the passion, and the impotence, of children. And to this worthless and nameless strife was a man consigned, who had spent the flower of his days in the first society of England; among women, the "cynosures" of elegance and fashion; in constant intercourse with men of first-rate ability and national influence; and in the centre and living glare of those great transactions, which moved all Europe, and which will shape its history for ages to come.

He died some years ago; after a career which might have made an instructive and curious biography, and no imperfect manual of "the art of rising in the world."

Those statements are given from public rumour; but the fact, that O'Beirne was the extinguisher of the “commercial propositions,” so well known in the history of the Irish legislature, in 1785, rests on higher authority.—Ministers, for the purpose of equalizing the system of trade, and diminishing the restrictions on the commerce between England and Ireland, had transmitted a series of resolutions to the Irish viceroy, the Duke of Rutland; whose chief secretary, Mr. Orde, was the instrument of bringing them forward in the Irish parliament. The measures were advantageous; for, in Grattan's language, who favoured them on their introduction, “They put an end to debt, they established Irish economy, and they made the British minister a guarantee for the integrity of the House of Commons and the economy of the Irish government.” The address was carried unanimously.

O'Beirne was at that period occupied on commercial subjects; and a pamphlet, in which he examined the “propositions,” threw so strong a light on their disadvantages to the

trade of the English outports, that ministers began to be startled at their own measure. The propositions were accordingly returned to Ireland *modified*. But the Irish opponents of government had now found a theme, and they made unsparing use of it. Flood, a man of great natural powers, highly cultivated, and who “wielded the fierce democracy” without a rival,” until the spirit of place came over him, and in a showy sinecure he buried his fame and his faculties together; was vehement in his reprobation of the measure. He charged it with overthrowing the independence of Ireland. “The British parliament has declared,” said he, “that the laws of British commerce shall be adopted in Ireland. There is but one thing more for the British parliament to declare,—that there shall be a slave-trade in Ireland ! The freedom of our constitution is necessary to support the freedom of our trade. But *if* a parliament could be so *profligate* as to attempt that liberty——(here Fitzgibbon, afterwards Lord Clare, the chief organ of the Irish government, contemptuously cheered.) “I ask you,” exclaimed Flood, raising his tone, “may

it not be attempted? But my voice shall be heard at the extremities of the land. My head and my heart are independent. My fortune is independent of prince or people. I am content to be a fellow-subject with my countrymen; but I will not be their fellow-slave. *That man shall not descend to the grave in peace*, who would destroy the freedom of my country."

The menace was characteristic, and perfectly intelligible. But nothing could fall lighter on Fitzgibbon, who was as fearless in the field as he was haughty in the cabinet; and who, being a good swordsman and a capital shot, was in all points a first-rate Irish attorney-general!

But if Flood lashed the contrivers of the measure, Grattan thundered and lightened on the measure itself. "Contemplate for a moment," exclaimed this nervous orator, "the powers this bill presumes to perpetuate; a perpetual repeal of trial by jury; a perpetual repeal of the great charter; a perpetual writ of assistance; a perpetual felony to strike an exciseman."

"The late Chief-Baron Burgh, speaking on the revenue bill, justly said, 'You give to the

dipping rule what you should deny to the sceptre.'

* * * * *

"Could the parliament of England covenant to subscribe your laws? Could she covenant that young Ireland should command, and that old England should obey? If such a proposal to England were treachery, in Ireland it cannot be constitution. I rest on the authority on which the revolution rests. Locke says, in his chapter on the abolition of government, that 'The transfer of legislative power is the abolition of the state, not a transfer.'

"Thus I congratulate this house and myself, that it is one of the blessings of the British constitution, that it cannot perish of rapid mortality, —not die in a day, like the men who should protect her. Any act which would destroy the liberty of the people is dead-born from the womb. Men may put down the public cause for a season; but another year will see the good institution of parliament shaking off the tomb, to re-ascend in all its pomp and plenitude."

Grattan then turned to the prohibitions, and

smote them in a memorable passage,—“ See, now, what you obtain by compensation. A covenant *not* to trade beyond the Cape of Good Hope or the Straits of Magellan ! This is not a surrender of the political rights of the constitution, but of the natural rights of man,—not of the privileges of parliament, but of the rights of nations. Not to sail beyond the Cape of Good Hope or the Straits of Magellan !—an awful interdict ! Not only European settlements, but neutral countries excluded ; and God’s providence shut out in the most opulent boundaries of creation ! Other interdicts go to particular places ; for local reasons ; because they belong to certain European states ; but here are neutral regions forbidden, and a path prescribed to the Irishman in the open sea. Other interdicts go to a determinate period of time ; but here is an eternity of restraint ! You are to have no trade at all during the existence of any company ; and no free trade to those countries after its expiration. This resembles rather a *judgment of God* than an *act of the legislature*, whether you measure it by immensity of space or infinity of duration,

and has nothing *human about it but its presumption.*"

It has been the habit of late years to scoff at Irish eloquence ; but let the scoffers produce among themselves the equal of this passage, or of a thousand others that still live in the records of the fallen parliament of Ireland. The meagre and affected style which has at length so universally pervaded all the departments of public speaking—parliament, bar, and pulpit—shrinks with natural jealousy from the magnificence and native power of this great faculty of appeal to the understandings of all men alike ; whose excellence was, that, at once enriched and invigorated by the noblest imagination, it awoke the reason not less than the feelings ; and even in its most fantastic decoration, lost nothing of its original strength. It was ornamented ; but its force was no more sacrificed to its ornament, than the solid steel of the Greek helmet to its plumage and sculptures. Grattan and Curran in Ireland, Sheridan and Burke in this country, were among the most logical of speakers ; their finest illustrations were only more powerful arguments. The gold and

jewels of that sceptre which they waved over the legislature with such undisputed supremacy, only increased the weight and substantial value of the emblem.

The obnoxious resolutions were finally withdrawn, and the house was in an uproar of applause. Curran finished a speech, full of every attribute of oratory, with a fine peroration.

“The bill is at an end. The cloud that had been collecting so long, and threatening to break in tempest and ruin on our heads, has passed harmlessly away. The siege that was drawn round the constitution is raised, and the enemy are gone: *Juvat ire et Dorica castra.* We may now go abroad without fear, and trace the dangers from which we have escaped. Here was drawn the line of circumvallation that cut us off for ever from the eastern world, and there the corresponding one that enclosed us from the west.” The orator then adverted to the principal members who had contributed to the defeat of the measure, in a few words, which, from their locality, produced an electric effect on the whole eager assemblage. “Here,” said he, pointing to Mr. Conolly, a country gentle-

man of great public influence, and brother-in-law of the Duke of Leinster, “Here stood the trusty mariner on his old station, the mast-head, and gave the signal. Here stood the collected wisdom of the state (Flood), explaining your weakness and your strength, detecting every ambuscade, and pointing to the masked battery that was brought to bear on the shrine of freedom ; and here, one (Grattan) was exerting an eloquence almost more than human ; inspiring, forming, directing, animating to the great purposes of your salvation.”

The introduction of a doubt of the legislative independence of Ireland into one of the resolutions, had produced the result of overthrowing the whole. Whether that were accident, or (as is more probable) cabinet dexterity, the purpose of the English government was answered. It was even more than answered ; for the withdrawal of the resolutions actually raised the popularity of the minister in Ireland. Thus the parliament exulted in the Hibernian triumph of *gaining* a loss ; and the English administration were relieved from the burden of a measure which might have deeply shaken their popu-

larity at home. But the inspirer of this piece of unwilling wisdom was O'Beirne.

There was still a little characteristic appendix to the debate ; for Fitzgibbon having said, with his usual haughtiness, “that if Ireland sought to quarrel with Great Britain, she was a besotted nation ; and that Great Britain was not easily roused, nor easily appeased :” adding the still more offensive remark, “that Ireland was *easily roused*, and *easily appeased* ;” this extra-official taunt raised a storm of indignation. The whole opposition demanded an apology ; which was tardily made by Fitzgibbon’s proud heart, in the shape of an *explanation*. But Curran was not to be so pacified. He had been bruised by the attorney-general’s official superiority in the courts, and he took a bitter delight in inflicting vengeance on him where his precedence went for nothing. He now pounced upon the assailant, tore his character in pieces, and declared that—“the libel which he had so contumeliously ventured to fix on Ireland, was in his own person a truth ; that *he* was *easily roused*, and *easily put down*.” The result was a duel ; in which the parties fired without effect. But the

hatred did not pass away with the rencontre, Fitzgibbon, on leaving the ground, saying, with rather unchivalric hostility, “ Well, Mr. Curran, you have escaped for this time,” and Curran retorting with severer pungency—“ If I did, it was no fault of yours, Sir; *you took aim enough.*”

The hostility continued through life, in the house and out of the house. Fitzgibbon rose to the summit of his profession, and was, in a few years after, Lord Chancellor. But he had not the magnanimity to forget in the chancellor what he had suffered in the lower grades of the bar. The “ king did not forgive the injuries of the Duke of Orleans;” power seemed only to reinforce his hostility; and Curran constantly charged him with labouring to crush, by the weight of the bench, the antagonist whom he could not overcome by his talents. But never man less consulted his own ease, than the chancellor by this perversion of authority. His adversary was not to be extinguished; the contest only roused him into the keener exertion of his great abilities. On all occasions Curran smote, or stung him; and the whole annals of vindictive oratory probably contain nothing

more excoriating, more utterly tearing off the skin, and steeping the naked nerve in poison, than Curran's celebrated invective on Lord Clare, in his speech before the privy-council of Ireland.

The prince was fond of manly sports; and cricket was often played in the lawn before the Pavilion, and the dinner which followed was served in a marquee. On one of those occasions, the Duke of York and Sheridan fell into dispute on some point of the game. The day was "a burning day in the month of September," the wine had gone round rapidly, and the disputants, who had heated themselves with play, began to attract the notice of the table. Sheridan at length angrily told the duke, "that *he* was not to be talked out of his opinion there or any where else, and that at play all men were on a par." The blood of the Brunswicks flamed, and the duke was evidently about to make some peculiarly indignant reply; when the prince stood up, and addressed them both.

The narrator of the circumstance, a person of rank, who was present, himself one of the most

attractive public speakers of the day, has often declared, that he never, on any occasion, saw any individual under the circumstances acquit himself with more ability. The speech was of some length, ten or fifteen minutes; it was alternately playful and grave, expressed with perfect self-possession, and touching on the occurrences of the game, the characters of both disputants, and the conversation at the table, with the happiest delicacy and dexterity. Among other points, the prince made a laughing apology for Sheridan's unlucky use of the phrase "on a par," by bidding his brother remember, that the impressions of school were not easily effaced, that Dr. Parr had *inflicted* learning upon Sheridan, and that, like the lover in the "Wonder," who mixes his mistress's name with everything, and calls to his valet, "roast me these Violantes;" the name of Parr was uppermost in Sheridan's sleep: he then ran into a succession of sportive quotations of the word *par*, in the style of—" *Ludere par impar, equitare in arundine longâ;*" until the speech was concluded in general gaiety, and the dispute was thought of no more.

Biography has, at least, not flattered Sheridan. Some of the writers of his life have evidently taken for their maxim, the more libel the more truth; and even his ablest biographer has suffered the clouds on Sheridan's moral character to spread to his intellectual. But where, in the whole compass of literature, shall we look for wit equal, not merely to what might be collected from the mass of Sheridan's dramatic efforts, but to that of any one of them. Congreve is the only dramatist who approaches him in variousness and grace of dialogue. But in wit, in the power of condensing and refining language until it sparkles, those alone who read Congreve with a view to the comparison can conceive his inferiority. There is, probably, more of the essence of wit in a single scene of the "School for Scandal" than in all that Congreve ever wrote. The facility and playfulness of Vanbrugh's dialogue were often praised by Sheridan, as a model for the stage. But Vanbrugh is content with humour, seldom aims at wit, and still seldomer reaches his aim. If we are to be told that Sheridan often covered the margin of his paper with *facetiae*, reserved to be

used on further occasion ; what is this, but the evidence that his fancy teemed faster than he required its offspring, that his vein was over-redundant, and that the thoughts which he deposited on the margin of his manuscript were only those which he could not crowd into his already crowded dialogue ? The true test of the rarity and vigour of his talent is, how much has it done—how immeasurably had it distanced all rivalry in its time—how dim is the prospect of a successor—and with what native and perpetual enjoyment the public, after the lapse of half a century, still look upon the polished point and Attic structure of the “School for Scandal.” Unhappily, this opinion must be limited to its wit. The moral, the characters, and the plot, belonged to a state of public manners, which no man of decorous feelings can desire to see revived.

Sheridan’s life furnishes only one more of the melancholy instances, of talent rendered useless, and great opportunities turned into shame and suffering, by the want of qualities higher than wit, and crowning the head of man with honours more enduring than public applause. But let

justice be done ; let him have upon his tomb the prize for which he toiled, and for which, neither living nor dead, has he found a competitor.

It will be fully allowed that this extraordinary man, of whom it was said that “he never kept either a receipt or a key,” was as careless in the abandonment, or the appropriation, of wit as of money. His seizure of the quaint expression of Sir Philip Francis, on the unlucky peace of Amiens—“This is a peace which every one will be pleased with, but no one will be proud of,” is as well known, as the indignation of the baronet at the plunder, such as it was.

Sheridan’s ruin was ambition ; and the ruin began at his first step into life. He rashly launched into an expenditure beyond his means ; coped with men of ten times his fortune, for the first year ; and before it was over, was in debt for the rest of his days. His carelessness was systematic ; for he openly professed, as his maxim, that “debt, though an inconvenience, was no disgrace.” The next rock on which his fatal ambition drove him was parliament. By attempting to combine the two characters of stage proprietor and statesman, he lost the ad-

vantages of both; the emoluments of the stage vanished from the touch of a man whose whole soul was in the struggles of party; while the substantial honours of public life were hopeless to one hourly perplexed by the task of stage management, and perpetually driven to extremity by the shattered finances of his theatre. By adopting the firm resolution to abandon either career, he might have made himself opulent and eminent in the other; for such were the superabundant powers of his mind, that nothing but a steady determination was wanting, to have given him eminence in any pursuit within the reach of genius.

Yet few men could plead such excuses for parliamentary ambition. Of all the great speakers of a day fertile in oratory, Sheridan had perhaps the most conspicuous natural gifts. His figure, at the period of his first introduction into the house, was striking; his countenance expressive, when excited by debate; his eye singularly large, black, and intellectual; and his voice one of the richest, most flexible, and most sonorous, that ever came from human lips. Pitt's was powerful, but monotonous; and its measured tone

often wearied the ear. Fox's was all confusion in the commencement of his speech; and it required some tension of ear throughout, to catch his words. Burke's was loud and bold, but unmusical; and his contempt of order in his sentences, and the abruptness of his grand and swelling conceptions, that seemed to roll through his mind like billows before a gale, often made the defects of his delivery still more striking. But Sheridan, in manner, gesture, and voice, had every quality that could give effect to eloquence.

Pitt and Fox were listened to with profound respect, and generally in silence, broken only by occasional cheers; but from the moment of Sheridan's rising, there was an expectation of pleasure, which to his last days was seldom disappointed. A low murmur of eagerness ran round the house; every word was watched for, and his first pleasantry set the whole assemblage on a roar. Sheridan was aware of this; and he has been heard to say, "that if a jester would never be an orator, yet no speaker could expect to be popular in a *full house* without a jest; and that he always made the experiment,

good or bad ; as a hearty laugh gave him the country gentlemen to a man."

Yet, it is a remarkable instance of the advantages of time and place to an orator, that his speeches on Hastings' trial, which were once the wonder of the nation, and which Pitt, Fox, and Burke, loaded with emulous panegyric, are now scarcely reckoned among his fortunate efforts. With the largest allowance for party or policy, it is impossible to doubt that the utterers of the panegyric were, to a great extent, sincere ; and that the nation at large hailed those speeches as the most consummate work, the twelfth labour, of modern eloquence. Yet Sheridan's total carelessness, if not cautious suppression, of them shews that his sagacity had formed another estimate of their value ; and the remnants which have come down to us appear memorable for nothing more than their success in bewildering the senatorial understanding, and their dexterity in deluding the national sense of justice.

But, in the house he was always formidable ; and though Pitt's moral or physical courage never quailed before man, yet Sheridan was the

antagonist with whom he evidently least desired to come into collision, and with whom the collision, when it did occur, was of the most fretful nature. Pitt's sarcasm on him as a theatrical manager, and Sheridan's severe, yet fully justified, retort, are too well known, to be now repeated; but there were a thousand instances of that "keen encounter of their wits," in which person was more involved even than party.

"I leave," said Pitt, at the conclusion of an attack of this kind; "I leave the honourable gentleman what he likes so well, the woman's privilege—the last word." Sheridan started up: "I am perfectly sensible," said he, "of the favour which the right honourable gentleman means, in offering me a privilege so peculiarly adapted to himself; but I must beg leave to decline the gift. *I* have no wish for the last word; *I* am content with having the *last argument.*"

He sometimes aimed more sweeping blows, and assailed the minister with his whole power. In a speech on the suspension of the habeas corpus act, during the disturbances of 1795; after detailing the sources of the popular irri-

tability, he drew Pitt's portrait to his face; of course, in the overcharged colours of a political enemy, but with great keenness and dexterity of exaggeration.

“ I can suppose the case,” said he, “ of a haughty and stiff-necked minister, who never mixed in a popular assembly, and who had, therefore, no common feeling with the people—no knowledge of the mode in which their intercourse is conducted; who was not a month in the ranks of this house before he was raised to the first situation; and though but on a footing with any other member, was elevated with the idea of a fancied superiority. Such a minister *can* have no communication with the people of England but through the medium of spies and informers; he is unacquainted with the mode in which their sentiments are expressed; he cannot make allowance for the language of toasts and resolutions adopted in the convivial hour. Such a minister, if he lose their confidence, will bribe their hate; if he disgust them by arbitrary measures, he will not leave them till they are completely bound and shackled; above all, he will gratify the vin-

dictive spirit of apostasy, by prosecuting all who dare to espouse the cause which he has betrayed; and he will not desist, till he has buried in one grave, the peace, the glory, and the independence of England."

But the effect of those vehement appeals was singularly heightened by the orator's facility of turning at once from the severe to the ludicrous, and giving light and distinctness, by the flashings of his wit, to his deepest-toned pictures of national calamity. In allusion to the state trials of 1794, he contemptuously said, " That *he* never pretended to preternatural valour, and that, having but one neck to lose, he should be as sorry to find *his* undergoing the operation of the lamp-post as any honourable gentleman in that house; but, that he must confess he felt himself considerably cheered by the discovery that the danger existed alone within the vision of the treasury bench. He could not help thinking, with the chief justice, that it was much in favour of the accused, that they had *neither men, money, nor zeal.*"

He then ridiculed the fears of government. " I own," said he, " that there was something

in the case, quite enough to disturb the virtuous sensibilities and loyal terrors of the right honourable gentleman. But so hardened is this side of the house, that our fears did not much disturb us. On the first trial *one* pike was produced. That was, however, withdrawn. Then a terrific instrument was talked of, for the annihilation of his majesty's cavalry ; which appeared, upon evidence, to be a *te-totum in a window in Sheffield*. But I had forgot—there was also a *camp in a back shop* ; an arsenal provided with *nine muskets* ; and an exchequer containing the *same number of pounds*, exactly nine ; no, let me be accurate, it was nine pounds and *one bad shilling*."

On the rumours of the Scottish conspiracy,—“ There is now,” exclaimed he, “ but one way of wisdom and loyalty, and that is panic. The man who is not panic-struck is to be incapable of common sense. My honourable friend (Windham) has acquired this new faculty, and has been a sage on the new plan, above a week old. Another friend (Burke) was inspired in the same fortunate manner. He has been so powerfully affected, that he saw in the sky

nothing but cloud, on the earth nothing but a bleak opposition, where there was not a politic bush or a shrub to shelter him from the coming tempest. But he has luckily taken refuge in the ministerial gaberdine, where I hope he may find security from the storm."—"The alarm had been brought in with great pomp and circumstance on a Saturday morning. At night, the Duke of Richmond stationed himself, among other *curiosities*, at the Tower! and a great municipal officer, the lord mayor, made a discovery in the east. He had found out that there was in Cornhill a debating society, where people went to buy treason at sixpence a-head; where it was retailed to them by inch of candle; and five minutes, measured by the glass, were allowed to each traitor, to perform his part in overturning the state.—In Edinburgh an insurrection was planned; the soldiers were to be corrupted; and this turned out to be—by giving each sixpence for porter. Now, what the *scarcity of money may be in that country* I cannot tell, but it does not strike me that the system of corruption had been carried to any great extent. Then, too, numbers were kept in pay, they were

drilled in dark rooms by a sergeant in a brown coat, and on a given signal they were to sally from a back parlour and overturn the constitution."

His quotations from the classics were often happy. The allusion to the motto of the Sun newspaper, which had been commenced under ministerial patronage, was universally cheered.—"There was one paper in particular, said to be the property of members of that house, which had for its motto a garbled part of a beautiful sentence; when it might with much more propriety have assumed the whole:

Solem quis dicere falsum
Audeat?—Ille etiam cæcos instare tumultus
Sæpe monet, fraudemque et operta tumescere bella."

The prince, himself remarkable for his dexterity in telling a story, was fond of collecting instances of the whim and humour of the Irish peasantry. One of those was—the history of Morgan Prussia.

Morgan, the gay and handsome son of a low Irish farmer, tired of home, went to take the chances of the world, and seek his fortune. By

what means he traversed England, or made his way to France, is not told. But at length he crossed France also; and, probably without much knowledge or much care whether he were moving to the north or the south pole, found himself in the Prussian territory. This was the day of the first Frederic, famous for his tall regiment of guards, and for nothing else; except his being the most dangerous compound of fool and madman among the crowned heads of the continent. He had but one ambition, that of inspecting twice a-day his regiment of a thousand grenadiers, not one of whom was less than six feet and a half high. Morgan was an Irish giant, and was instantly seized on by the Prussian recruiting sergeants, who *forced* him to *volunteer* into the tall battalion. This turn of fate was totally out of the Irishman's calculation; and the prospect of carrying a musket till his dying day on the Potsdam parade, after having made up his mind to live by his wits and rove the world, more than once tempted him to think of leaving his musket and his honour behind him, and fairly trying his chance for escape. But the attempt was always found impracticable; the

frontier was too closely watched ; and Morgan still marched up and down the Potsdam parade with a disconsolate heart ; when one evening a Turkish recruit was brought in ; for Frederic looked to nothing but the thews and sinews of a man, and the Turk was full seven feet high.

“ How much did his majesty give for catching that heathen ? ” said Morgan to his corporal. “ Four hundred dollars,” was the answer. He burst out into an exclamation of astonishment at this waste of royal treasure upon a Turk. “ They cannot be got for less,” replied the corporal. “ What a pity my five brothers cannot hear of it ! ” said Morgan, “ I am a dwarf to any one of them, and the sound of half the money would bring them all over immediately.” As the discovery of a tall recruit was the well known road to favouritism, five were worth at least a pair of colours to the corporal ; the conversation was immediately carried to the sergeant, and from him through the gradation of officers to the colonel, who took the first opportunity of mentioning it to the king. The colonel was instantly ordered to question Morgan. But

he had instantly lost all memory on the subject.—“He had no brothers; he had made the regiment his father and mother and relations, and there he hoped to live and die.” But he was urged still more strongly, and at length confessed, that he had brothers, even above the regimental standard, but that “nothing on earth could stir them from their spades.”

After some time, the king inquired for the five recruits, and was indignant when he was told of the impossibility of enlisting them. “Send the fellow himself for them,” he exclaimed, “and let him bring them back.” The order was given, but Morgan was suddenly “broken hearted at the idea of so long an absence from the regiment.” He applied to the colonel to have the order revoked, or at least given to some one else. But this was out of the question, for Frederic’s word was always irrevocable; and Morgan, with a disconsolate face, at length prepared to set out upon his mission. But a new difficulty now struck him. “How was he to make his brothers come, unless he shewed them something in the shape of the recruiting money?” This objection was at last

obviated by the advance of a sum equal to about three hundred pounds sterling, as a first instalment for the purchase of his family. Like a loyal grenadier, the Irishman was now ready to attempt anything for his colonel or his king, and Morgan began his journey. But, as he was stepping beyond the gates of Potsdam, another difficulty occurred; and he returned to tell the colonel, that of all people existing, the Irish were the most apt to doubt a traveller's story, they being a good deal in the exercise of that style themselves; and that when he should go back to his own country, and tell them of the capital treatment and sure promotion that a soldier met with in the guards, the probability was—"that they would laugh in his face;" as to the money, "there were some who would not scruple to say that he stole it, or tricked some one out of it. But, undoubtedly, when they saw him walking back only as a common soldier, he was *sure* that they would not believe a syllable, let him say what he would, about rising in the service."

The objection was intelligible enough, and the colonel represented it to Frederic, who,

doubly outrageous at the delay, swore a grenadier oath, ordered Morgan to be made a *sous officier*, and, with a sword and epaulette, sent him instantly across the Rhine, to convince his five brothers of the rapidity of Prussian promotion. Morgan flew to his home in the county Carlow, delighted the firesides for many a mile round with his having outwitted a king and a whole battalion of grenadiers, laid out his recruiting money on land, and became a man of estate at the expense of the Prussian treasury.

One ceremony remains to be recorded. Once a year, on the anniversary of the day in which he left Potsdam and its giants behind, he climbed a hill within a short distance of his farm, turned himself in the direction of Prussia, and, with the most contemptuous gesture which he could possibly contrive, bade good-by to his majesty! The *ruse* was long a great source of amusement, and its hero, like other heroes, bore through life the name earned by his exploit, *Morgan Prussia*.

Burke was among the earliest friends of the

prince; and his admirable talents, sincere honesty, and inexhaustible zeal in whatever cause he undertook, made him one of the most valuable advocates and advisers whom his royal highness could have found in the empire. No individual, in the memory of the house, had risen to such sudden fame as Burke; if the difficulties of his first years are taken into consideration. Pitt's youth was sustained by his hereditary renown, at a time when to be the son of Chatham was a passport to all honours. His early official rank also gave an extraordinary weight to his authority as a speaker; and when the house listened at once to eloquent language, and the sentiments of the first minister of the crown, the impression was complete.

Fox had the same advantage of hereditary renown; for if Lord Holland was an inferior orator to Chatham, he still was a speaker of distinguished acuteness, force, and knowledge, and the most daring and able antagonist of that great man which the house had ever witnessed.

Fox, too, as the head of opposition, had a species of official weight scarcely less than that of the minister. He was the oracle of a party

which might, within twenty-four hours, be masters of the government; and the most common declaration from the lips of the leader must be received with the attention due to the public will of the aristocracy of England.

But Burke had nothing to depend upon but himself; he possessed none of the powerful levers of English birth and connexion, to raise him above the natural obstacles which in all lands obstruct the stranger. Of all helpless beings, an Irishman cast loose into the streets of London, in that day, was the most helpless. The Scotchman clung to some lucky emigrant from the north, colonised in the fat fertility of the metropolis; or found protection in his national name, and patiently worked his passage to fortune. But the Irishman landed in the metropolis as if he landed on the shores of Africa; he was on *terra firma*, but no more,—the earth produced no fruits to him; the landscape shewed him nothing but a desert; and it was a piece of no common good fortune, if his first fraternal embrace were not from a brotherhood luckless like himself, and his final residence were not in a dungeon.

At this period, but little intercourse subsisted between the two countries. They talked of each other as if half the world lay between. To England, Ireland was, what Sicily was to the Greek—a land of monsters and marvels, of rebellious giants and desperate hazards, which made the sleek skin of England quiver to its extremities. To Ireland, England was a place of inordinate prejudice and national gloom; memorable only for licence at home and ambition abroad; lavishing her vindictiveness on Ireland in perpetual visitations of super-subtle secretaries and dull viceroys; in unintelligible acts of parliament, and taxes without mercy and without end; yet, nevertheless, having certain paths knee-deep in gold-dust for the gallant adventurers who were bold enough to run the chance of being starved, or hanged, in the discovery.

The romance on both sides has been much cooled by time and knowledge. England is no more the El Dorado, nor Ireland the Cyclop's cave: the peaceful annual importations of her ten thousand paupers and her hundred representatives, shew the generosity with which the

sister country can part with her population for the sake of the empire ; as the zeal with which the importation of both is welcomed here, shews that England is not to be outdone in the magnanimous virtues.

Burke had scarcely entered the house when he drew all eyes upon him. He was marked out for eminence, from his first speech. "A young Irishman has just appeared here, who astonishes everybody by his information and eloquence," was Fitzpatrick's account of him to his correspondent in Ireland.

Parliament was Sheridan's undoing ; for it excited his vanity, already too headstrong ; prevented him from making any rational effort to restore his fortune, already falling into decay ; and, by its temptations alike to the peculiar species of indolence and the peculiar species of exertion which he most unwisely loved, led him from one evil to another, until his fate was decided.

To Sheridan, parliament, in its best day, was but a larger club, where he found a ready entertainment, an easy fame, irregular hours, and a showy, amusing, and various society, always

willing to receive his jest, and to repay it with applause. Thus he fluttered through life, the moth round the candle; continually wheeling closer to ruin, until his flight was scorched at last, and he dropped, like the insect, withered and wingless, to writhe on the ground in misery for awhile, and die.

But Burke was created for parliament. His mind was born with a determination to things of *grandeur and difficulty*.

*“Spumantemque dari, pecora inter inertia, votis
Optat aprum, aut fulvum descendere monte leonem.”*

Nothing in the ordinary professions, nothing in the trials or triumphs of private life, could have satisfied the noble hunger and thirst of his spirit for exertion. This quality was even so predominant, that to it a large proportion of his original failures, and of his subsequent unfitness for all that public business which belongs to detail, is to be ascribed. No Hercules could wear the irresistible weapons and the lion's skin with more natural supremacy; but none could make more unhappy work with the distaff. Burke's magnitude of grasp and towering conception were so much a part of his nature, that

he could never forego their exercise, however unsuited to the occasion. Let the object be as trivial as it might, his first instinct was to turn it into all shapes of lofty speculation, and try how far it could be moulded and magnified into the semblance of greatness. If he had no large national interest to summon him, he winged his tempest against a turnpike bill, or flung away upon the petty quarrels and obscure peculations of the underlings of office, colours and forms that might have emblazoned the fall of a dynasty.

It is perfectly consistent with this power, that but few recollections of his private thoughts should remain. Though his conversation was remarkable for fluency and variety, and Johnson's character of it must have been deserved,— “Sir, if a stranger were to be driven with Mun Burke under a gateway, from a shower, he must discover him to be a great man”—still, his thoughts had little to do with the level of society. Where his treasure was, there were his watchings and his aspirations; and even the fragments of his familiar talk which remain, generally bear some reference to the public and

engrossing topics of the orator and the statesman. Windham, always chivalric, had been once paying some extravagant compliment to the old French noblesse. Burke, who with all his abhorrence of the revolution, was fully awake to the follies of the old regime, took his pupil to task on the subject.

“Sir,” said he, “you should disdain levity on such a theme. I well knew the unhappy condition of those gentlemen. They were brave, gay, and graceful; they had much more honour than those who tore them down and hunted them like wild beasts; and to the full as much public virtue as those who libelled them most for the want of it; but, for all the true enjoyment of life, for everything in the shape of substantial happiness, they might as well have been so many galley-slaves. Forbidden, by custom, every natural exertion, and, of course, every natural reward, of the human understanding; excluded from the professions; from literature, except as scribblers of love songs; and from ambition, except as the wearers of blue and red ribands, and hangers on about the court; what could they enjoy? Political dis-

tinction, the noblest stirrer of the indolence of man, was closed upon them. To do, they had nothing but to die of war or *ennui*. They absolutely did nothing. Their very look wearied me ; I would rather have looked on the skulls in the catacombs."

" Yet," retorted Windham, " I suppose not from *their* industry. I never heard that they did much."

" True, Sir," gravely answered Burke ; " but they did not shock one's feelings by *pretending to be alive!*"

He was sometimes vexed into humour. David Hartley, who had been employed as a negotiator of the treaty with America, was remarkable for the length and dulness of his speeches in the house. One day, when Burke was prepared to take an important part in the debate, he saw, to his infinite vexation, the house melting down, under Hartley's influence, from an immense assemblage into a number scarcely sufficient to authorize the speaker's keeping the chair. In the course of this heavy harangue, Hartley had occasion to desire that

some clause in the riot act should be read at the table. Burke could restrain himself no longer. “The riot act,” said he, starting from his seat; “my honourable friend desires the riot act to be read! What would he have? Does he not see that the mob has dispersed already?”

It was of this interminable talker against time, that Jenkinson, the first Lord Liverpool, told the amusing story,—that once, seeing Hartley rise to speak, he left the house, to breathe a little of the fresh air. A fine June evening tempted him on. It was no more than five o’clock. He went home, mounted his horse, and rode to his villa, some miles from town; where he dined, rambled about the grounds, and then returned at an easy pace to London. The hour was now nine o’clock; and conceiving that the division must be nigh, he sent a note to the house to inquire what had been done, and who had spoken. The answer was, that “nobody had spoken but Mr. Hartley, and that he was speaking still!” The note, however, contained the cheering conjecture, “that he might be expected to close soon.” Even that conjecture was disappointed; for,

when Jenkinson at last went down to Westminster, he found Hartley on his legs, in the same position in which he had left him half a day before, pouring out the same sleepy wisdom, and surrounded by a slumbering house. The story does not tell by what means this inveterate haranguer was ever induced to conclude. But he had, by that time, been speaking five hours.

Fitzpatrick was one of the prince's circle, which he adorned by his wit and courtly manners. He was a handsome man, with all the air of fashion, and the acquirements which belong to a life spent in the first opportunities of cultivating both mind and manners. Like all the leading whigs, he was distinguished for those poetical *jeux d'esprit*, those toyings about the foot of Parnassus, which enabled them to possess the indulgences, and some of the fame, of letters, without challenging criticism. They wrote in the spirit of the French school of "royal and noble" poets; and with that easy mixture of sportiveness and sarcasm which raised the laugh of the moment, and passed

away—the true spirit of the *vers de société*. But they sometimes affected a graver strain; and Fitzpatrick's "Inscription on the Temple of Friendship, at St. Anne's Hill," has, with Horatian lightness, a touch of that philosophy which so delicately shades the mirth of the Epicurean bard,—

" The star, whose radiant beams adora
With vivid light the rising morn,—
The season changed; with milder ray
Cheers the sweet hour of parting day.
So Friendship (of the generous breast
The earliest and the latest guest)
In youth's rich morn with ardour glows,
And brightens life's serener close.

" Benignant power! in this retreat,
Oh, deign to fix thy tranquil seat!
Where, raised above life's dusky vale,
Thy favourites brighter scenes shall hail;
Think of the past but as the past,
And know true happiness at last.
From life's too anxious toils remote,
To thee the heart and soul devote;
(No more by idle dreams betrayed,)
See life, what life's at best, a shade;
Leave fools to fling their hearts away,
And scorn the idol of the day.
Yes; while the flowret's in its prime
We'll breathe the bloom, redeem the time,

Nor waste a single glance to know
What cares disturb the world below !”

Fitzpatrick, educated with Fox, brought into public life with him, initiated at Brookes's, and familiar with the whole round of high life, was inevitably a Foxite. Fox made him secretary at war, and his faith was never impeached, among the changes of a time rich in political versatility. It would have been fortunate for this attractive personage if he had not extended his fidelity to an imitation of more than the public life of his friend. But he played deep, and exhausted his income and his life together in a round of dissipation. Fox, by some marvellous power, resisted the effects of gaming, politics, and pleasure alike ; misfortune seemed to rebound from him, until it was at last weary of its attacks, and he reached almost the tranquil age of a philosopher. But Fitzpatrick's powerful frame broke down into premature decay, and for some years before his death he could be scarcely said to live.

The trial of Hastings had brought Sir Philip

Francis into public notice, and his strong Foxite principles introduced him to the prince's friends. His rise is still scarcely explained. From a clerk in the war-office, he had been suddenly exalted into a commissioner for regulating the affairs of India, and sent to Bengal with an appointment, estimated at ten thousand pounds a-year! But, on his return to England he joined opposition, declared violent hostilities against Hastings, and gave his most zealous assistance to the prosecution, though the House of Commons would not suffer him to be on the committee of impeachment. He was an able and effective speaker; with an occasional wildness of manner and eccentricity of expression which, if they sometimes provoked a smile, often increased the interest of his statements.

But the usual lot of those who have identified themselves exclusively with any one public subject, rapidly overtook him. His temperament, his talents, and his knowledge, were all Indian. With the impeachment he was politically born, with it he lived, and when it withered away, his adventitious and local celebrity perished

along with it. He clung to Fox for a few years more; but while the great leader of opposition found all his skill necessary to retain his party in existence, he was not likely to solicit a partisan, at once so difficult to keep in order and to employ. The close of his ambitious and disappointed life was spent in ranging along the skirts of both parties, joining neither, and speaking his mind with easy, and perhaps sincere, scorn of both; reprobating the whigs, during their brief reign, for their neglect of early promises; and equally reprobating the ministry, for their blindness to fancied pretensions.

But he was still to have a momentary respite for fame. While he was fast going down into that oblivion, which alone rewards the labours of so many politicians, a pamphlet, ascribing Junius's letters to Sir Philip, arrested his descent. Its arguments were plausible, and, for awhile, opinion appeared to be in favour of the conjecture, notwithstanding a denial from the presumed Junius; which, however, had much the air of his feeling no strong dislike to being sus-

pected of this new title to celebrity.* But further examination fatally diluted the opinion, and left the secret, which had already perplexed so many unravellers of literary webs, to perplex the grave idlers of generations to come. —

— Yet the true wonder is less in the concealment—for a multitude of causes might have produced the continued necessity even after the death of the writer—than in the feasibility with which the chief features of Junius may be fastened on almost every writer of the crowd for whom claims have been laid to this dubious honour; while, in every instance, some utter discrepancy finally starts upon the eye, and excludes the claim.

* His note, on the occasion, to the editor of one of the newspapers, might mean anything, or nothing. It was in this form: “Sir,—You have attributed to me the writing of Junius’s letters. If you choose to propagate a false and malicious report, you may.”

Yours, &c.

“P. F.”

Sir Francis died some years since; but the evidence which was to settle the question has not transpired, and an iron chest left by the late Lord Grenville is now said to be the depository. The tantalizing rumour, however, is, that it is not to be opened for fifty years to come!

Burke possessed all, and more than all, the vigour, the information, and the command of language; but he was incapable of the virulence and the disloyalty. Horne Tooke had the virulence and the disloyalty in superabundance; but he totally wanted the cool sarcasm and the polished elegance; even if he could have been fairly supposed to be at once the assailant and the defender. Wilkes had the information and the wit; but his style was incorrigibly vulgar, and all its metaphors were for and from the mob: in addition, he would have rejoiced to declare himself the writer: his well-known answer to an inquiry on the subject being, “Would to heaven I had!” *Utinam scriptisssem!* Lord George Germaine has been more lately brought forward as a candidate; and the evidence fully proves that he possessed the dexterity of style, the powerful and pungent remark, and even the individual causes of bitterness and partisanship, which might be supposed to stimulate Junius: but, in the private correspondence of Junius with his printer, Woodfall, there are contemptuous allusions to Lord George’s conduct in the field,

which at once put an end to the question of authorship.

Dunning possessed the style, the satire, and the partisanship: but Junius makes blunders in his law, of which Dunning must have been incapable. Gerard Hamilton (Single-speech) *might* have written the letters, but he never possessed the moral courage; and was, besides, so consummate a coxcomb, that his vanity must have, however involuntarily, let out the secret. The argument, that he was Junius; from his notoriously using the same peculiarities of phrase, at the time when all the world was in full chase of the author, ought in itself to be decisive against him; for nothing can be clearer than that the actual writer was determined on concealment, and that he would never have toyed with his dangerous secret, so much in the manner of a school-girl, anxious to develop her accomplishments.

It is with no wish to add to the number of the controversialists on this bluestocking subject that a conjecture is hazarded, that Junius will be found, if ever found, among some of the humbler names of the list. If he had been a

political leader, or, in any sense of the word, an independent man, it is next to impossible that he should not have left some indication of his authorship. But, it is perfectly easy to conceive the case of a private secretary, or dependent of a political leader, writing by his command, and for his temporary purpose, a series of attacks on a ministry; which, when the object was gained, it was of the highest importance to bury, so far as the connexion was concerned, in total oblivion. Junius, writing on his own behalf, would, in all probability, have retained evidence sufficient to substantiate his title when the peril of the discovery should have passed away, which it did within a few years; for who would have thought, in 1780, of punishing even the libels on the king in 1770? or when, if the peril remained, the writer would have felt himself borne on a tide of popular applause high above the inflictions of the law.

But, writing for another, the most natural result was, that he should have been *pledged* to extinguish all proof of the transaction; to give up every fragment that could lead to discovery at any future period; and to surrender

the whole mystery into the hands of the superior, for whose purposes it had been constructed, and who, while he had no fame to acquire by its being made public, might be undone by its betrayal.

The marks of *private secretaryship* are so strong, that all the probable conjectures have pointed to writers under that relation; Lloyd, the private secretary of George Grenville; Greatrakes, Lord Shelburne's private secretary; Rosenhagen, who was so much concerned in the business of Shelburne house, that he may be considered as a second secretary; and Macauley Boyd, who was perpetually about some public man, and was at length fixed by his friends on Lord Macartney's establishment, and sent with him to take office in India.*

But, mortifying as it may be to the disputants of the subject, the discovery of the living Junius is now beyond hope; for Junius intimates his having been a spectator of parliamentary proceedings

* Dyer, a clever member of the Johnson Club, and to whom Burke and Reynolds were executors, has been suggested, but hitherto without sufficient evidence.

even further back than the year 1743; which, supposing him to have been twenty years old at the time, would now give more than a century for his experience. In the long intervals since 1772, when the letters ceased, not the slightest clue has been discovered; though, doubtless, the keenest inquiry was set on foot by the parties assailed. Sir William Draper died with but one wish, though a sufficiently uncharitable one, that he could have found out his castigator, before he took leave of the world. Lord North often avowed his total ignorance of the writer. The king's reported observation to Gen. Desa-
guiliers, in 1772, "We know who Junius is, and he will write no more," is unsubstantiated; and if ever made, was probably prefaced with a supposition; for no publicity ever followed; and what neither the minister of the day, nor his successors, ever knew, could scarcely have come to the king's knowledge but by inspiration, nor remained locked up there but by a reserve not far short of a political error.

But the question is scarcely worth the trouble of discovery; for, since the personal resentment is past, its interest could arise only from pulling

the mask off the visage of some individual of political eminence, and giving us the amusing contrast of his real and his assumed physiognomy; or from unearthing some great unknown genius. But the leaders have been already excluded; and the composition of the letters may have, after all, demanded no extraordinary powers. Their secret information has been vaunted; but Junius gives us no more than what would now be called the "chat of the clubs;" the currency of conversation, which any man mixing in general life might collect in a half-hour's walk down St. James's Street; he gives us no insight into the *purposes* of government; of the *counsels* of the *cabinet* he evidently knows nothing. The style was undeniably excellent for the purpose, and its writer must have been a man of ability. If it had been original, he might even have been a man of genius; but it was notoriously formed on Col. Titus's letter, which, from its strong peculiarities, is of no difficult imitation. The crime and the blunder together of Junius was, that he attacked the king, a man so publicly honest and so personally virtuous, that his assailant inevitably pronounced himself

a libeller. But if he had restricted his lash to the contending politicians of the day, justice would have rejoiced in his vigorous severity. Who could have regretted the keenest application of the scourge to the Duke of Grafton, that most incapable of ministers, and most offensively profligate of men; to the indomitable selfishness of Mansfield; to the avarice of Bedford, the suspicious negotiator of the scandalous treaty of 1763; or to the slippered and drivelling ambition of North, substituting jests for statesmanship, and sacrificing an empire to the passion for power, which he was able neither to wield nor to sustain.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE KING'S ILLNESS.

THE prince's adoption of whig politics had deeply offended his royal father. The coalition ministry had made Fox personally obnoxious to the monarch, who remembered its power only by a series of mortifications, so keen, that they had inspired the idea of seeking refuge for his broken spirit and insulted authority in Hanover. This conception the king was said to have so far matured, as to have communicated to Thurlow, who, however, resisted it in the most direct manner; telling his majesty,—that “though it might be easy to go to Hanover, it might be difficult to return to England; that James the Second's was a case in point; and that the best plan was, to let the coalition take their way for

awhile, as they were sure to plunge themselves into some embarrassment, and then he might have them at his disposal.

The advice was solid, and it was successful. But the king exhibited his aversion to the ministry in the most open manner, by steadily refusing to bestow an English peerage while they were in power; and it was surmised, that Fox was driven by his consciousness of this total alienation, to the rash and defying measure of the India bill, as a support against the throne. The game was a bold one; for its success would have made Fox king of lords, commons, and people; and George the Third, king of masters of the stag-hounds, gentlemen of the bed-chamber, and canons of Windsor. But it failed, and its failure was ruin. It not merely overthrew Fox, but it spread the ruin to everything that bore the whig name. His banner was not simply borne down in the casual fortunes of the fight; but it was broken, trampled on, and extinguished. By the India bill the languors of political warfare were turned into the fierceness of personal combat; and whiggism, pressed by the new-armed wrath of the monarch, and losing

its old refuge in the popular sympathy, hated by the throne, and repelled by the nation, feebly and finally, dispersed on the field.

Such is the fate of the most powerful parties, when the spirit that once animated them has passed away. The high-minded patriots of 1688 would have found it impossible to recognise their descendants in the shifting politicians of the eighteenth century. But woe be to the people whose liberties depend upon the character of individuals ! The revolution itself would have been a mockery, but for its taking refuge in the religious virtue of the nation. All the overthrows of all the tyrannies of ancient or modern days were never able to make corruption free, any more than the loudest professions of principle ever made a profligate the fit trustee and champion of national freedom. The personal vice nullifies and contaminates the public profession. No revolution ever succeeded, nor ever deserved to succeed, which was not demanded by the same natural and righteous necessity which demands the defence of our fireside ; and which was not conducted by men unstained by the crime of individual ambition,

or the still deeper crime of bartering the national blood for their own avarice, licentiousness, or revenge;—men who felt themselves periling their lives for an object that dignifies death; and, in the impulse of holiness and faith, offering up their existence a willing and solemn sacrifice to their fellow-men and their God.

The success of the first French revolution is no answer to this principle; for France had shewed only the frightful rapidity with which the name of freedom can be vitiated, and the incalculable means of public convulsion and misery which may exist under the surface of the most ostentatious patriotism. Her second revolution is yet to display its results; but however auspicious may have been its commencement, its only security will be found in purifying the habits of the people.

The same evidence and evil are to be found in every country of Europe. If Italy, with her magnificent powers, her vivid susceptibility, her living genius, and her imperishable fame—Italy, where every foot of ground was the foundation of some monument of the supremacy of the human mind, is now a prison; the crime

and the folly are her own ; her own vices have rivetted the chain round her neck, her own hand has barred the dungeon ; and in that dungeon she will remain for ever, if she wait until vice shall give vigour to her limbs, or superstition throw back the gates of her living sepulchre. A purer influence must descend upon her. A deliverer, not of the earth, earthy—an immortal visitant, shedding the light of holiness and religion from its vesture, must descend upon her darkness, and bid her arise.

If Spain and Portugal have been deeply convulsed with civil discord ; who can hope to see rational freedom ever existing in those lands, while the corruption of the people feeds the licence of the throne ; while, if the sovereign imprisons, the peasant stabs ; while, if the crown violates the privileges of the subject, the subject habitually violates the holiest ties of our nature ; while, if government is tyranny, private life is rapine, bigotry, dissoluteness, and revenge ? Let the public reforms be as specious as they may, the political suffering will only deepen ; until personal reform comes to redeem the land, until faith is more than an intolerant superstition,

courage than assassination, and virtue than confession to a monk. Till then, freedom will be but a name ; and the fall of a Spanish or Portuguese tyrant but a signal for his assailants to bury their poniards in each other's bosoms ; constitution will be but an upbreaking of the elements of society ; and the plunging of despotism into the gulf, but a summons to every gloomy and furious shape of evil below to rise upon the wing, and poison the moral atmosphere of mankind.

The India bill gave the final blow to the existence of the Old Whigs. The name had long survived the reality ; but now even the name perished. When the fragments of the party were collected, in the course of years, after this long and desperate dispersion, they were known by another name ; and the New Whigs, however they might claim the honours of the title, were never recognised as successors to the estate. From this period, Pitt and toryism were paramount. Fox, defeated in his ambition of being a monarch, was henceforth limited to such glories as were to be found in being a

partisan. Unequalled in debate, he talked for twenty years, and delighted the senate; was the idol of Westminster, the clubs, and the conversations at Devonshire House; but he still saw himself in an inexorable minority in the only place where triumph was worthy of his abilities, or dear to his ambition. Perhaps, too, if Fox had never existed, his rival might never have risen to his full eminence; for even great powers require great opportunities, and the struggle with the colossal frame and muscle of Fox's genius might be essential to mature the vigour of his young antagonist and conqueror. Still, when all hope of wresting the supremacy out of Pitt's hand was past, the exercise was useful; and Fox, for the rest of his days, had the infelicitous honour of keeping those powers in practice, whose security might have dropped the sceptre. He was the noblest captive linked to Pitt's chariot-wheel, but to that chariot-wheel he was linked for life; and no other arm could have so powerfully dragged his rival's triumphal car up the steeps of fame.

The prince, unhappily, soon created a new

grievance, that came home more directly to the royal bosom than even his politics. Rolle's allusion to his marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert* was believed by the king to be true, and no act could be calculated to give deeper offence to the monarch, as a parent, a Protestant, or a man of virtue. The lady was high-bred and handsome; and, though by seven years the prince's elder, and with the formidable drawback of having been twice a widow, her attractions might justify the civilities of fashion. But her rank and her religion were barriers, which all should have known to be impassable.

The king was peculiarly sensitive to *mésalliances* in the blood royal. The Marriage Act of

* Mrs. Fitzherbert was the daughter of Wm. Smythe, Esq. of Tonge Castle, and niece of Sir E. Smythe, Bart. of Acton Burnel, Salop. Her sister was married to Sir Carnaby Haggerstone, Bart. At an early age she married Mr. Weld, of Lulworth Castle, Dorset. On his death, she married Mr. Fitzherbert, of Swinnerton, Leicestershire, a remarkably handsome man, who died of either over exertion in a walk from Bath to town, or some imprudence of the same kind at the burning of Lord Mansfield's house, in the riots of 1780. The lady was a Roman catholic.

1772 had originated in the royal displeasure at the marriages of his brothers,* the Dukes of Cum-

* The Duke of Cumberland had married Mrs. Horton, Lord Irnham's daughter; the Duke of Gloucester the Countess-Dowager of Waldegrave, but this marriage was not acknowledged for some time after. The bill passed rapidly through parliament, yet was debated with unusual perseverance in all its stages. With the public it was highly unpopular, and was assailed by every weapon of seriousness, and ridicule. It was described as intolerably aristocratical; as insulting to English birth and beauty; as violating one of the first laws of our being; and even as giving a direct encouragement to crime. Epigrams and satires innumerable were showered upon the bill, and its opponents certainly had all the wit and all the women on their side. One of those *jeux d'esprit* was—

THE ROYAL MARRIAGE ACT.

Says Dick to Tom, “ This Act appears

 The oddest thing alive ;
To take the crown at eighteen years,
 The wife at twenty-five.

The thing a puzzle must remain ;
 For, as old Dowdeswell† said,
‘ So early if one’s fit to reign
 One must be fit to wed.’ ”

Says Tom to Dick, “ The man’s a fool,
 Or knows no rubs of life ;
Good friend, ’tis easier far to rule
 A kingdom than a wife ! ”

† An opponent of the bill.

berland and Gloucester, with subjects; and the determination with which the bill was urged through the legislature against the strongest resistance, shewed the interest which his majesty took in preserving the succession clear.

But the prince's error threatened further consequences than the passionate violation of an unpopular law; for the known marriage of the heir-apparent with a Roman catholic must have } defeated his claim to the throne. }

During his life, the marriage had been neither proved nor disproved. It was early rumoured, that the lady's scruples were soothed by having the ceremonial performed according to the rites of her own church. But no Roman-catholic dispensation could have acquitted the parties of sustaining a connexion notoriously void by the laws of the land. Fox's declaration in the house admits of no subterfuge; language could not have been found more distinctly repelling the entire charge.

The theme is repulsive. But the writer degrades his moral honour, and does injustice to the general cause of truth, who softens down such topics into the simplicity of romance.

Yet, between the individuals in question there can be no comparison. The prince was in the giddiest period of youth and inexperience ; he was surrounded by temptation ; it was laid in his way by individuals craftily accomplished in every art of extravagance and ruin ; for him to have escaped the snare would have been not less than the most fortunate of accidents, or an exhibition of the manliest sense and virtue. But, for those who ministered to his errors, or shared in them, the condemnation must be altogether of a deeper dye.

In this unhappy intercourse originated all the serious calamities of the prince's life. From its commencement it openly drew down the indignation of his excellent father ; it alienated his general popularity in an immediate and an extraordinary degree ; it shook the confidence of the wise and good in those hopes of recovery and reformation, which such minds are the most ready to conceive, and the most reluctant to cast away ; even the cold gravity of this un-lover-like connexion gave it the appearance of a premeditated offence against the morals and feelings of the country. It was the prince's

ruin ; it embarrassed him with the waste of a double household, when he was already sinking under the expenses of one ; and precipitated him into bankruptcy. It entangled him, more and more inextricably, with those lower members of the cabal, who gathered round him in the mask of politics only to plunder ; and who, incapable of the dignified and honourable feelings which may attach to party, cared nothing for the nation, or for political life, beyond what they could filch for their daily bread from the most pitiful sources of a contemptible popularity. It disheartened all his higher friends, the Duke of Portland, Fox, Grey, Burke, and the other leaders of opposition ; while it betrayed the prince's name and cause into the hands of men who could not touch even royalty without leaving a stain behind. Finally, it destroyed all chance of happiness in his subsequent marriage ; and was the chief ingredient in that cup of personal anxiety and public evil which was so sternly forced to his lips, almost to the close of his days.

Fox's declaration in the house had given the first example of the pangs which the prince was

condemned to feel. It unquestionably threw dishonour on the connexion. Yet, to expect Fox to retract his words, and this, too, when the object gained was the payment of the prince's debts, was too much even for friendship. Grey was then sounded;* but he declined this singular office. Sheridan was the next resource; and, with that lamentable pliancy which, in him, resulted less from a casual deference to the will of others, than from a total want of moral elevation, an unhappy callousness to the principle of self-respect, he undertook to equivocate the house into sufferance. In allusion to the prince's offer, through Fox, to undergo an examination in the lords, he affectedly said, "That the house deserved credit for decorum in not taking advantage of the offer, and demanding such an inquiry. But while his royal highness's feelings had been, doubtless, considered on the occasion, he must take the liberty of saying, however some might think it a subordinate consideration, that there was another person entitled, in every delicate and

* Moore's Life of Sheridan.

honourable mind, to the same attention; one whom he would not otherwise venture to describe, or allude to, but by saying, it was a name which malice or ignorance alone could attempt to injure, and whose character and conduct claimed, and were entitled to, the truest respect."

Nothing could be more filmy than this veil; and nothing more contemptible than the conduct of the man who exhibited himself thus ready to cast it, thin as it was, across the eyes of the house. But the question had been settled long before; the equivocation was scornfully left undisturbed; and the individuals were given over to that tardy prudence which will learn no lessons but from misfortune.

A second and more expressive proof of the public disappointment painfully followed. In October, 1788, symptoms of that disease of mind, which afterwards broke out into such violence, were apparent in the king. In November, the fears of the nation were confirmed; and it was declared expedient to provide for the government of the country.

On the occasion of a similar, but slighter, at-

tack,* his majesty's speech in parliament, on his recovery, declared, that the "thoughts with which the memory of his illness affected him, touching the welfare of his people and his children, urged him to propose to its consideration, whether it might not be expedient to vest in him the power of appointing, from time to time, by instruments in writing, under his sign manual, the queen, or some other person of the royal family usually residing in Great Britain, to be the guardian of any of his children who might succeed to the throne before the age of eighteen; and to be regent of the kingdom until his successor should attain that age, subject to the restrictions and regulations specified in the act made on occasion of his father's death.—The regent so appointed to be assisted by a council, composed of the several persons who, by reason of their dignities and offices, were constituted members of the council established by that act, together with those whom they might think proper to leave to his majesty's nomination."

* April 24, 1765.

A bill on this principle, but with considerable modifications relative to the individuals who might be appointed to the regency and guardianship, was passed in the same year.*

The recurrence of the king's illness now made the immediate meeting of parliament necessary; and on the 20th of November, the day to which it had been prorogued, the session began. But the opinions of the royal physicians were still so dubious, and both ministers and opposition were still so imperfectly prepared for any direct measures, that a fortnight's adjournment was agreed to without difficulty.

Fox was then absent on a foreign tour; but he had been sent for, and was expected hourly. In the mean time, Sheridan appears to have acted as the chief counsellor of opposition, in which capacity he addressed the following letter to the prince:†—

“Sir,—From the intelligence of to-day, we are led to think that Pitt will make something more of a speech, in moving to adjourn, on

* May 15, 1765.

† Moore's Life of Sheridan.

Thursday, than was at first imagined. In this case, we presume your royal highness will be of opinion that we must not be totally silent. I possessed Payne* yesterday with my sentiments on the line of conduct which appears to me best to be adopted on this occasion, that they might be submitted to your royal highness's consideration; and I take the liberty of repeating my firm conviction, that it will greatly advance your royal highness's credit, and, in case of events, lay the strongest grounds to baffle every attempt at opposition to your royal highness's just claims and rights, that the language of those who may be in any sort suspected of knowing your royal highness's wishes and feelings, should be that of great moderation in disclaiming all party views, and avowing the utmost readiness to acquiesce in any reasonable delay.

“At the same time, I am perfectly aware of the arts which will be practised, and the advantages which some people will attempt to gain by time. But I am equally convinced, that a third party will soon appear, whose efforts

* Captain Payne (afterwards Admiral), the prince's private secretary.

may, in the most decisive manner, prevent this sort of situation and proceeding from continuing long.

“ Payne will probably have submitted to your royal highness more fully my idea on this subject, towards which I have already taken some successful steps. Your royal highness will, I am sure, have the goodness to pardon the freedom with which I give my opinion ; after which I have only to add, that whatever your royal highness’s judgment decides shall be the guide of my conduct, and will undoubtedly be so to others.”

Those negotiations are now chiefly valuable for the light which they throw on human nature, and Lord Chancellor Thurlow was destined to afford the chief illustration. His lordship, so well known as a leading lawyer and a clamorous partisan, was especially a boaster of immaculate principle. The present transaction shewed him to be also a low intriguer and a contemptible hypocrite. While he sat at the council table of the ministry he was intriguing with opposition ; while he was intriguing with opposition he was

watching the king's physicians; and the moment he was assured, from the king's symptoms, that he might be heroic without hazard, he marched down to the house, proclaimed himself the inalienable servant of the throne, and obtested Heaven in language little short of blasphemy, that—"whenever he forgot his king, might his God forget him."

Sheridan's allusion to the "third party" referred to Thurlow. This negotiation took Fox by surprise, who had been previously pledged to give the seals to Loughborough. Thurlow, however, was hired, and must have his hire; to which Fox, after no slight struggle with himself, acceded. His letter on this subject is a striking instance of the vexatious compliances to which men are sometimes driven, who seem to be at the height of their ambition, and whom the world looks on as carrying everything at their will.

"Dear Sheridan,—I have swallowed the pill; a most bitter one it was,—and have written to Lord Loughborough, whose answer must, of course, be, content. What is to be done next?

Should the prince himself, or you, or I, or Warren, speak to the chancellor? The objection to the last is, that he must probably wait for an opportunity, and that no time is to be lost. Pray tell me what is to be done. I am convinced, after all, the negotiation will not succeed, and am not sure that I am sorry for it. I do not remember feeling so uneasy about any political thing I ever did in my life. Call if you can.

Yours ever,

C. J. F.

It is astonishing to see how feebly a sense of public decency or personal honour sometimes acts upon the minds of men accustomed to the traffic of politics. In Thurlow, we have the instance of an individual at the head of an honourable profession, and therefore doubly bound to think of character; opulent, and therefore under no necessity of consulting the increase of his income; advanced in life, and therefore at once destitute of the excuses of young ambition, and incapable of the long enjoyment of power; and yet involving himself in a labyrinth of self-degradation, for the wretched purpose of retaining place. There is a just pleasure in being able to

state after this, that he lost the object of his scandalous compromise. He retained the name of chancellor, but he lost alike the public respect attached to his rank, and the real power of a cabinet minister. The hollowness of his colleague could not escape the eye of Pitt. He suffered him to linger for awhile in a condition of half-confidence in the cabinet, which must have been a perpetual torment to his haughty heart; but even the half-confidence at length changed into open bickering, and Pitt was said to have charged him with direct inefficiency, as “a man who proposed nothing, opposed everything, and gave way to everything.” Thurlow’s day was now done; the prize slipped from his hands; and, with abilities and professional knowledge which might have made him one of the pillars of the state, he rapidly sank into the deserved decay of a selfish and unprincipled politician.

The chancellor’s brutal manners in private life, and insolence on the bench, were, as they always are, repaid by private and public disgust. His habit of execration on all subjects was no-

torious, and excited a still deeper aversion ; and it was equally an error in opposition and in ministers to have suffered themselves to negotiate with a man whose merited unpopularity must have heavily encumbered any party which he espoused. In the crowd of pamphlets and verses produced by the struggle, Thurlow was not forgotten ; he figured at great length in the “Probationary Odes,” where he is represented as expectorating curses on every public name ; or, as an epigram expressed it,—

“Here bully Thurlow flings his gall
Alike on foes and friends ;
Blazing, like blue devils at Vauxhall,
With sulphur at both ends.”

The Probationary Ode, after some verses too much in the style of his lordship’s vocabulary for quotation here, gives a strophe of calmer scorn :

“ Fired at her voice, I grow profane !
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain :
To Thurlow’s lyre more daring notes belong.
Now tremble every rebel soul,
While on the foes of George I roll
The deep-toned *execrations* of my song.

In vain my brother's piety, more meek,
Would preach my kindling fury to repose,
Like Balaam's ass, were he inspired to speak,
"Twere vain, I go to *curse* my prince's foes."

But Thurlow's treachery, even at the moment when he was probably surest of having hoodwinked both the parties, happened to be made ludicrously visible to both. He raised an open laugh against himself at the council-table by coming in *with the prince's hat in his hand!* which, in the confusion of his double plot, he had carried away from a Carlton-house conference. Fox and his friends were as fully aware of him. A letter from Lord Loughborough, who watched him with the keenness of a rival candidate, lays bare the chancellor's policy. Thurlow had contrived to obtain permission to visit the king during his illness, and thus ascertain the chances of recovery; a knowledge which he employed for the due regulation of his own conscience. This privilege the letter deprecates, as giving him the entire advantage of position. It is addressed to Sheridan.

“The chancellor's object evidently is to make

his way by himself, and he has managed hitherto as one very well practised in that game. His conversations both with you and with Mr. Fox were encouraging ; but at the same time checked all explanations on his part, under a pretence of delicacy towards his colleagues. When he let them go to Salt-hill, and contrived to dine at Windsor, he certainly took a step that most men would have felt not very delicate in its appearance ; and, unless there was some private understanding between him and them, not altogether fair ; especially if you add to it the *sort of conversation he held with regard to them.*

“I cannot help thinking that the difficulties of managing the patient have been *excited or improved, to lead to the proposal* of his inspection, (without the prince’s being conscious of it;) for, by that situation, he gains an easy and frequent access to him, and an opportunity of *possessing the confidence* of the queen. I believe this the more, from the account of the *tenderness* that he shewed at the first interview, for I am sure it is not in his character to feel any. With a little instruction from Lord Hawksbury, the sort of management that was

carried on by means of the princess dowager, in the early part of the reign, may easily be practised.

“In short, I think he will try to *find the key of the back stairs*, and with that in his pocket, take any situation that preserves his access, and enables him to hold a line between different parties.”

It was while all those vigilant eyes were fixed upon him, with every movement watched, ridiculed, and scorned, with the whole ordinance of party pointed against him, and ready to give fire at the first signal, that this noble intriguer, plumed in the full triumph of having escaped detection, came down to the house and astonished his brother peers by a burst of unexpected piety. But he was not suffered to remain long under this delusion. A storm of contempt and reproof was poured upon him by opposition. Thurlow had contrived to weep in the delivery of his speech. His tears were a new source of ridicule; his newborn virtue was held up in contrast with his life; and the chancellor's name was from that day a watch-

word for everything worthless in political ter-giversation.

An epitaph, from some unknown pen, condenses the public feelings on the occasion :—

TO THE MEMORY OF —

Here lies, beneath the prostituted mace,
A patriot, with but one base wish—for place :
Here lies, beneath the prostituted purse,
A peer, with but one talent—how to curse :
Here lies, beneath the prostituted gown,
The guardian of all honour—but his own ;
Statesman, with but one rule his steps to guide—
To shun the sinking, take the rising side ;
Judge, with but one base law—to serve the time,
And see in wealth no weakness, power no crime ;
Christian, with but one value for the name,
The scoffer's proudest privilege—to blaspheme ;
Briton, with but one hope—to live a slave,
And dig in deathless infamy his grave.

The details of the royal illness must now be passed over. There would be neither wisdom nor feeling in recalling to the public mind the circumstances of an affliction which then threw the empire into sorrow, and which still must give pain to bosoms which it is our duty to honour. But the transactions arising from it are invaluable, as a lesson to partisanship.

To make the prince unrestricted regent would have been to make him virtually king for the time, and to have made Fox "viceroy over him." The prospect was dazzling, but there were difficulties in the way. The royal fortress stood upon a hill, which was not to be stormed even by the boldness of opposition, while it remained embarrassed with the restraints of law, popular rights, and personal declarations and pledges of all kinds. But the time pressed; every hour added to the strength of the garrison; and Fox took the reckless resolution of cutting away his whig encumbrances, and assaulting the battlements in the unembarrassed right of despotism.

"I have heard," exclaimed he, "of precedents for binding the regent; but I can find none existing for laying a hand on an heir-apparent of full capacity and age to exercise power. It behoves, then, the house not to waste a moment, but to proceed with all becoming speed and diligence to *restore* the sovereign power and the exercise of the royal authority. From what I have read of history, from the ideas I have formed of the law, and, what is

still more precious, of the spirit of the constitution, I declare that I have not, in my mind, a doubt that I should think myself culpable if I did not take the first opportunity of saying, that in the present condition of his majesty, his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales has as clear, as express a right to exercise the power of sovereignty, during the continuance of the illness and incapacity with which it has pleased God to afflict his majesty, as in the case of his majesty's having undergone a natural demise."

This was so palpable an abandonment of the first principles of constitutional law, that it is scarcely to be accounted for, but by that frenzy which sometimes seizes on powerful understandings when tempted by more powerful passions. Fox was evidently inflamed, by the sight of all the objects of his ambition within his grasp, into the desperate experiment of casting away his character, and leaving it to success to justify the abjuration of his principles. By this language he had nullified the power of parliament and the nation alike. "The circumstance to be provided for," he repeated, .

“did not depend on their deliberations as a house of parliament,—it rested elsewhere.” This “elsewhere” was the hereditary *right* of the prince to assume the throne!—not less. Sheridan followed him, and presumptuously warned the house “of the *danger* of provoking” the prince’s assertion of his claim. But Pitt instantly threw back the menace, in language which found an indignant echo in the house and the nation.

“We have now,” said he, “an additional reason for asserting the authority of the house, and defining the boundaries of right; when the deliberate faculties of parliament are invaded, and an indecent menace is thrown out to awe our proceedings. I trust the house will do its duty, in defiance of any threat. Men, who feel their native freedom, will not submit to a threat, however *high the authority* from which it may come.”

But Fox was the great antagonist, and it was over him that Pitt exulted with the loftiest sense of superiority. When he heard him utter the ominous sentence, declaring the regent’s independence of parliament, he turned round to

the member who sat next him, and, with a brightened countenance, and striking his thigh triumphantly, said,—“I’ll *un-whig* the gentleman for the rest of his life.”*

Pitt, now master of the house, and secure of the national support, urged his measures vigorously; and in the committee on the state of the nation,† carried, by a division of 268 to 204, after a long debate, the two resolutions: first, “that there was an interruption of the royal authority;” and secondly, “that it was the duty of the two houses of parliament to supply that defect.” The next step taken by the triumphant minister was to embody his intentions in a letter to his royal highness:—

“Sir,—The proceedings in parliament being now brought to a point, which will render it necessary to propose to the House of Commons the particular measures to be taken for supplying the defect of the personal exercise of the royal authority during the present interval; and your royal highness having some time

* Moore.

† Dec. 16, 1788.

since signified your pleasure that any communication on this subject should be in writing, I take the liberty of respectfully entreating your royal highness's permission to submit to your consideration the outlines of the plan which his majesty's confidential servants humbly conceive (according to the best judgment which they are able to form) to be proper to be proposed in the present circumstances.

“ It is their humble opinion, that your royal highness should be empowered to exercise the royal authority, in the name and on the behalf of his majesty, during his majesty's illness; and to do all acts which might legally be done by his majesty; with provisions, nevertheless, that the care of his majesty's royal person, and the management of his majesty's household, and the direction and appointment of the officers and servants therein, should be in the queen, under such regulations as may be thought necessary. That the power to be exercised by your royal highness should not extend to the granting real or personal property of the king, (except as far as relates to the renewal of leases,) to the granting any office in reversion, or to the granting,

for any other term than during his majesty's pleasure, any pension, or any office whatever, except such as must by law be granted for life, or during good behaviour; nor to the granting any rank or dignity of the peerage of this realm to any person except his majesty's issue, who shall have attained the age of twenty-one years.

“ Those are the chief points which have occurred to his majesty's servants. I beg leave to add, that their ideas are formed on the supposition that his majesty's illness is only temporary, and may be of no long duration. It may be difficult to fix beforehand the precise period for which those provisions ought to last; but if, unfortunately, his majesty's illness should be protracted to a more distant period than there is reason at present to imagine, it will be open hereafter to the wisdom of parliament, to reconsider these provisions whenever the circumstances appear to call for it.

“ If your royal highness should be pleased to require any further explanation on the subject, and should condescend to signify your orders that I should have the honour of attending your

royal highness for that purpose, or to intimate any other mode in which your royal highness may wish to receive such explanation, I shall respectfully wait your royal highness's commands.

“ I have the honour to be,

“ With the utmost deference and submission,
Sir,

“ Your royal highness's most dutiful

“ And devoted servant,

“ W. Pitt.”

“ Downing Street, Tuesday Night, Dec. 30, 1788.”

The prince's letter in answer attracted remarkable attention, from its tone of dignity, and the general grave excellence of its composition. All the leading persons of the prince's councils were guessed as the writers, and each with some degree of plausibility ; but the votes fell chiefly on Sheridan. However, the question is cleared up at last, and the authorship is given to Burke, on the testimony of Sir James Mackintosh, and the following note of the late Sir Gilbert Elliot (Lord Minto), Jan. 31, 1789 :

“ There was not a word of the prince's letter to Pitt mine. *It was originally Burke's*, altered

a little, but not improved, by Sheridan and other critics.

“ The answer made by the prince yesterday to the address of the two houses was entirely mine, and done in a great hurry, half an hour before it was to be delivered.”*

Answer to Mr. Pitt's Letter, delivered by his Royal Highness to the Lord Chancellor, Jan. 1, 1789.

“ The Prince of Wales learns from Mr. Pitt's letter, that the proceedings in parliament are now in a train which enables Mr. Pitt, according to the intimation in his former letter, to communicate to the prince the outlines of the plan which his majesty's confidential servants conceive to be proper to be proposed in the present circumstances.

“ Concerning the steps already taken by Mr. Pitt, the prince is silent. Nothing done by the two houses of parliament can be a proper subject of his animadversion; but when, previously to any discussion in parliament, the outlines of

* Moore.

a scheme of government are sent for his consideration, in which it is proposed that he shall be personally and principally concerned, and by which the royal authority and the public welfare may be deeply affected, the prince would be unjustifiable, were he to withhold an explicit declaration of his sentiments. His silence might be construed into a previous approbation of a plan, the accomplishment of which every motive of duty to his father and sovereign, as well as of regard for the public interest, obliges him to consider as injurious to both.

“ In the state of deep distress in which the prince and the whole royal family were involved by the heavy calamity which has fallen upon the king, and at a moment when government, deprived of its chief energy and support, seemed peculiarly to need the cordial and united aid of all descriptions of good subjects, it was not expected by the prince that a plan should be offered to his consideration, by which government was to be rendered difficult, if not impracticable, in the hands of any person intended to represent the king's authority, much less in the hands of his eldest son, the heir-

apparent of his kingdoms, and the person most bound to the maintenance of his majesty's just prerogatives and authority, as well as most interested in the happiness, the prosperity, and the glory of the people.

“ The prince forbears to remark on the several parts of the sketch of the plan laid before him; he apprehends it must have been formed with sufficient deliberation to preclude the probability of any argument of his producing an alteration of sentiment in the projectors of it; but he trusts with confidence to the wisdom and justice of parliament, when the whole of this subject, and the circumstances connected with it, shall come under their deliberation.

“ He observes, therefore, only generally on the heads communicated by Mr. Pitt, and it is with deep regret that the prince makes the observation, that he sees in the contents of that paper a project for producing weakness, disorder, and insecurity, in every branch of the administration of affairs; a project for dividing the royal family from each other, for separating the court from the state; and therefore, by disjoining government from its natural and accus-

tomed support, a scheme for disconnecting the authority to command service from the powers of animating it by reward, and for allotting to the prince all the invidious duties of government without the means of softening them to the public by any one act of grace, favour, or benignity.

“ The prince’s feelings on contemplating this plan are also rendered still more painful by observing, that it is not founded on any general principle, but is calculated to infuse jealousies and suspicions (wholly groundless, he trusts) in that quarter whose confidence it will ever be the first pride of his life to merit and obtain.

“ With regard to the motive and object of the limitations and restrictions proposed, the prince can have but little to observe. No light or information is offered him by his majesty’s ministers on these points. They have informed him *what* the powers are which they mean to refuse him, not *why* they are withheld.

“ The prince, however, holding as he does, that it is an undoubted and fundamental principle of this constitution, that the powers and

prerogatives of the crown are vested there as a trust for the benefit of the people, and that they are sacred only as they are necessary to the preservation of that poise and balance of the constitution which experience has proved to be the true security of the liberty of the subject, must be allowed to observe, that the plea of public utility ought to be strong, manifest, and urgent, which calls for the extinction or suspension of any one of those essential rights in the supreme power or its representative, or which can justify the prince in consenting, that in his person an experiment shall be made to ascertain with how small a portion of the kingly power the executive government of this country may be carried on.

“ The prince has only to add, that if security for his majesty’s repossessing his rightful government, whenever it shall please Providence, in bounty to the country, to remove the calamity with which he is afflicted, be any part of the object of this plan, the prince has only to be convinced that any measure is necessary, or even conducive to that end, to be the first to

urge it, as the preliminary and paramount consideration of any settlement in which he would consent to share.

“ If attention to what is presumed might be his majesty’s feelings and wishes on the happy day of his recovery be the object, it is with the truest sincerity the prince expresses his firm conviction, that no event would be more repugnant to the feelings of his royal father, than the knowledge that the government of his son and representative had exhibited the sovereign power of the realm in a state of degradation, of curtailed authority, and diminished energy—a state hurtful in practice to the prosperity and good government of his people, and injurious in its precedent to the security of the monarch and the rights of his family.

“ Upon that part of the plan which regards the king’s real and personal property, the prince feels himself compelled to remark, that it was not necessary for Mr. Pitt, nor proper to suggest to the prince, the restraint he proposes against his granting away the king’s real and personal property. The prince does not conceive that, during the king’s life, he is by law

entitled to make any such grant; and he is sure that he has never shewn the smallest inclination to possess any such power. But it remains with Mr. Pitt to consider the eventual interests of the royal family, and to provide a proper and natural security against the mismanagement of them by others.

“ The prince has discharged an indispensable duty, in thus giving his free opinion on the plan submitted to his consideration.

“ His conviction of the evil which may arise to the king’s interests, to the peace and happiness of the royal family, and to the safety and welfare of the nation, from the government of the country remaining longer in its present maimed and debilitated state, outweighs, in the prince’s mind, every other consideration, and will determine him to undertake the painful trust imposed upon him by the present melancholy necessity, (which, of all the king’s subjects, he deplores the most,) in full confidence that the affection and loyalty to the king, the experienced attachment to the house of Brunswick, and the generosity which has always distinguished this nation, will carry him through

the many difficulties inseparable from this critical situation, with comfort to himself, with honour to the king, and with advantage to the public.

(Signed)

“ G. P.

“ *Carlton House, January 2, 1789.*”

The minister suffered no further delay to take place ; but brought in his propositions, and carried them by large majorities, in the face of the whole strength of opposition, armed with protests, motions, and the formidable resistance of the blood-royal. The Dukes of York, Cumberland, and fifty-five other peers, signed a remonstrance against the restrictions. The princes of the royal family even expressly refused to suffer their names to appear in the commission for opening the session. But Pitt was not to be shaken ; the first reading of the bill was firmly carried in the Commons ;* and another week had brought it to the verge of commitment ; when the struggle was stopped at once, by the cheering intelligence that the king's illness was already giving way, and that within a short

* Feb. 12, 1789.

time his perfect recovery might be expected. Those tidings, which diffused sincere joy through the nation, were speedily confirmed; and within a month, a commission for holding the parliament was issued by the king.

This had been the lottery of politics. If the prince had ascended the throne, even with limited powers, Fox and his friends would have obtained every wish which it was in the regent's power to realize. A turn of chance had now flung them into political exile; and the minister used his first leisure unhesitatingly to punish the symptoms of wavering among his own followers. The Duke of Queensberry, Lords Carteret and Malmesbury, and the Marquess of Lothian, were summarily dismissed from office. But it was in Ireland, where the defection had been most glaring, that vengeance and justice were gratified together, in a sweeping exclusion of functionaries "venturous enough to speculate on London politics, and criminal enough to speculate on the unlucky side."

Yet the wit and eloquence of opposition were never more conspicuous than in those disastrous times of their party. Sheridan was in a per-

petual glow; and, whether sportive or sarcastic, was the delight of the house.

“I am staggered,” said he, “when I hear Dr. Willis’s assertions. I hear him attribute his majesty’s illness to twenty-seven years of study, abstinence, and labour; and he tells us that his medicine has cured all this. What must I think of Dr. Willis, when I hear that his physic can, in one day, overcome the effects of seven-and-twenty years’ hard exercise, seven-and-twenty years’ study, and seven-and-twenty years’ abstinence? It is impossible for me to preserve gravity on such a subject. It reminds one of the nostrums that are to cure this or that malady, and also *disappointments in love, and long sea voyages!*”

In allusion to the usual charge of insincerity against the minister, he declared, “that he believed the right honourable gentleman sincere in his intention, though he did not profess Dr. Willis’s gift, that of seeing hearts by looking into countenances. He remembered the doctor’s telling the committee, ‘that he could thus see the *heart* of any man, whether he was sick or not.’ And

the declaration appeared to have *particularly alarmed* the right honourable gentleman."

The restrictions had left the regent the power of making war and peace; but had prohibited his making any change in the household. Sheridan treated this reserve with unceasing ridicule.

"Talk of his majesty's feelings when he shall recover, and find his *household* changed. We are to be told that his feelings would be less shocked to learn that the constitution of the country was changed, or part of his dominions, by an unjust war, lost: or, by a foolish peace, ceded to foreign potentates. What was this, but like a man who, having entrusted his mansion to a person in his absence, to take care of it, and finding it gone to ruin, and the winds of heaven suffered to blow through every part of it, the enclosures to be broken, the sheep to be shorn, and all exposed to ruin and decay, yet should have no regret for those things, but feel all his anxiety awakened for a few looking-glasses and worthless *gilt lumber* locked up in an old-fashioned drawing room."

Burke's appeals to the house were in a loftier style, and distinctly shewed that he had already formed those views, which were to be yet developed in his immortal labours on the French revolution.

"I consider myself," said he, "fully justified in asserting that Great Britain is governed by a hereditary monarchy. Heaven forbid it should ever prove otherwise: it is our powerful barrier, our strong rampart, against the ambition of mankind. It says to the most aspiring, 'thus far shalt thou go, and no farther:' it shelters the subject from the tyranny of illegal tribunals, bloody proscriptions, and the long train of evils attendant upon the distractions of ill-guided and unprincipled republics."

His opinion of Thurlow was contemptuously avowed. "What is to be done when the crown is in a *deliquium*? It is intended, we are told, to set up a *man with black brows, and a large wig*, to be a *scarecrow* to the two houses, and give a fictitious assent in the royal name."

The chancellor's tears had excited great ridicule; but it was left for Burke to give him the castigation due to his hoary hypocrisy. "The

other house are not yet recovered from that extraordinary burst of the pathetic which had been exhibited the other evening; they have not yet dried their eyes, nor been restored to their placidity. The tears shed on that occasion were not the tears of patriots for dying laws, but of *lords for expiring places*. They were the 'iron tears that flowed down Pluto's cheek,' and rather resembled the dismal bubbling of Styx than the gentle streams of Aganippe.

"In fact, they were tears for his majesty's bread. There is a manifest difference between this house and the other, between plebeians and patricians. We, in an old-fashioned way, would have said, 'If we could no longer serve the king, we will no longer receive his wages, we will no longer eat his bread.' But the lords of the household held a different language; they would stick by the king's loaf as long as a single cut of it remained; they would fasten on the crust, and gnaw it while two crumbs of it held together; and they would proudly declare, at the same time, that it was the honour of the service, the dignity of the office, which alone

they regarded. The lords of the household were beyond the reach of influence ; they were a set of saints and philosophers, ' superior to the lusts of the flesh and the vanities of this world.'

By a fiction of law, the great seal was to represent the royal authority, and under this semblance of a king the session was to be opened. For this singular substitution the valid plea was, the necessity of the case. But it was too open to burlesque to escape Burke, who, amid the laughter of the house, turned it in all the lights of vindictive pleasantry.

"I cannot, for my soul," he exclaimed, "understand the means of this art magic, any more than I can doubt the purpose. I see a phantom raised. But I never heard of one being raised in a family but for the purpose of *robbing the house*. The whole ceremonial, instead of being a representative of the forms of the constitution, is a masquerade, a mummary, a piece of buffoonery, used to ridicule every form of government. A phantom conjured up to fright propriety and drive it from

the isle; a spectre, to which, as to Banquo's ghost, it might be said—

‘Avaunt, and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold,
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
That thou dost glare with!’”

In adopting Fox's words, that the limitations of the regency went to establish a republic, and that it would have been the manlier way to call for a republic at once, Burke burst into a strain of lofty scorn, which may have suggested the famous apostrophe—“O calumniated crusaders! O tame and feeble Cervantes!”—in Fox's letter to the electors of Westminster.

“A republic! do I hate a republic! No. But it cannot be speculated upon, according to the principles of our constitution: I love, I adore, the true principles of a republic; but is this the mode of instituting a republic?”

“O republic, how art thou libelled! how art thou prostituted, buffooned, and burlesqued! O fabric! built after so many ages, and cemented by the blood of so many patriots, how art thou degraded! As well might it be said that the

creatures of the Opera-house were representatives of heroes, the true and perfect Cæsars, Catos, and Brutuses, as that strange and jumbled chaos the representative of a real republic!"

The India bill had been the death-blow of the original whigs; the regency question was now all but the death-blow of the party which assumed the name. Disunion and discredit fell upon them from this hour; opposition lost its final hold on the national confidence. Partisanship was still active, and profession as loud as ever, but the empire looked upon it thenceforth in its true light, that of a mere combination to drive ministers from their places, and usurp them in their own persons. The three leaders of opposition were equally conscious that their cause was lost. And this consciousness was not relieved by feeling that any one of them had exhibited the wisdom essential to all great successes. Fox's extravagant assertion of the right of the prince had given the first advantage of the field to his antagonist. Sheridan's still more obnoxious threat of princely vengeance had embittered the constitutional

offence into personal indignation ; and Burke's wild indulgence in the impulses of a brilliant but uncontrollable fancy had dazzled his friends to the edge of a precipice, from which to retreat was ignominy, while to advance was ruin.

There can now be no doubt that the triumph of opposition would have been the downfall of law ; and that the doors of parliament might as well be closed for ever, when an unlimited regent, in his own misinterpreted right, should set his foot upon the first step of the throne.

Burke's dissatisfaction, at this period, was well known ; and a brief but sufficiently expressive record of it is preserved in a letter to his Irish friend, Lord Charlemont *—“ Perpetual failure,” said he, “ even though nothing in that failure can be fixed on the improper choice of the object, or the injudicious choice of means, will detract every day more and more from a man’s credit, until he ends without success and without reputation. In fact, a constant pursuit even of the best objects, without

* Hardy’s Memoir.

adequate instruments, detracts something from the opinion of a man's judgment. This, I think, may in part be the cause of the inactivity of others of our friends who are in the vigour of life, and in possession of a great degree of lead and authority.

“I do not blame them, though I lament that state of the public mind in which the people can consider the exclusion of such talents and virtues from their service as a point gained to them. The only point in which I can find anything to blame in these friends is, their not taking the effectual means, which they certainly had in their power, of making an honourable retreat from their prospect of power into the possession of reputation, by an effectual defence of themselves. There *was* an opportunity which was not made use of for the purpose, and which could scarcely have failed of turning the tables on their adversaries.”

Such are the bitter fruits of political ambition even in a noble mind, instinctively repellent of all the basenesses that, while they stimulate the passions of meaner spirits, envenom their punishment. Burke knew nothing of those

feelings which strew scorpions on the pillow of the artificial and the perfidious ; yet this is the letter of a vexed heart, ready to exclaim that all is vanity. But his triumph was to come ; and the time was already fast approaching when, with prouder objects in view than a struggle for the narrow distinctions of office, he was to stand forth the champion of the surviving religion, manliness, and loyalty of Europe ; a light to England, and a redeeming honour to her legislature and her people.

The king's recovery closed the contest in the English parliament ; but the luckless fortune of Ireland reserved her for one of those blunders which are ludicrously supposed to be indigenous to the soil. The Irish parliament had acknowledged the unlimited right of the regent almost by acclamation. There never had been a more precipitate worship of the rising sun. The Irish ministers were overwhelmed by this rush of new-born allegiance, or suffered themselves to swell the tide. All was principled hypocrisy and magnanimous defection ; and the holders of office, the wearers of blue and green ribbons, and the bearers of

gold keys, black rods, and white sticks, exulted in being able to give such costly attestation of their new faith, as the sacrifice of their badges on the altar of the regency. But, from fraud the progress is easy to faction. In the midst of this carnival of party, treason began to fix its eye on darker objects; murmurs were heard that were little short of rebellion, and the key note of republicanism was touched more than once in this chorus of new-born loyalty. But, in the wild resolutions of the Irish whigs, and their still wilder speeches, were also founded those just alarms, which predisposed the English cabinet to the strong measure of the Union.

Still, whatever might have been the original plot of the drama, all finished in characteristic burlesque. The last scene of the pageant found a substitute in farce. The lord-lieutenant having naturally refused to make himself a culprit by forwarding the "resolutions," an embassage from the lords and commons was sent with them to London. The deputation reached London, and made their first bow to the prince; but it

was a week *after* the announcement of the king's convalescence ! Thus vanished into thin air that fabric of place, pension, and general spoil, which patriotism had erected with such triumphant anticipation. The rewards of the deputies were—a gracious answer from the prince, informing them that they were *too late* ; the shrinking thanks of the Irish parliament, conscious that it had committed an irreparable folly ; and the angry remorse of the whole array of officials, trembling at the just indignation of the throne.

But, the first infliction was the laugh of the empire. Caricatures of “ the six deputies riding on bulls,” and satirical squibs and verses of every kind, were poured upon this unhappy failure.

EPIGRAM.—THE BULL-RIDERS.

Though Pats are famed for sportive skulls,
This feat all feats surpasses ;
For, not content with breeding bulls,
Those bulls are rode by *asses*.

THE GLORIOUS HALF DOZEN.

Six rogues have come over our pockets to pick,
And dispose of their second-hand ware;
To play the buffoon, and jump, tumble, and trick,
But they've come—the *day after the fair*.

Productions like those are made only for the moment; but one more, giving the names of the commission, must be quoted. It is obviously founded on Horace's Ode, “*Pastor quum traheret.*”

THE PROPHECY.

When the packet o'er the tide
Bore Ierne's patriot pride,
Harry Grattan's delegates,
Pregnant with a nation's fates,
Pondering all on bribes and places,
Making all, all kinds of faces;
Schemes of native thievery brewing,
Scoundrels, made for fools' undoing;
While along the loaded deck
Sickening lay the human wreck,
Right beneath the pilot's nose
From the wave a phantom rose;
Bull-necked, black-mouthed, water-bloated,
Still buff-vested and blue-coated;
Round of belly, round of chin,
Thus began the shape of sin:—

“ Asses, from the land of asses,
 Ere your cargo this way passes,
 While your worships have an ear,
 Hear your true-blue Prophet, hear !
 Hear me, every party hack !
 Scoffed at, ye shall all come back —
 Scoffed at as the tools of tools,
 All incorrigible fools !

“ Hear me, purse-bound, lack-brained Leinster !
 Model of an ancient spinster ;
 Hear me, mountebank O’Neill !
 Tied to every rabble’s tail ;
 Hear me, Conolly ! the prime
 Of talkers against sense and time ;
 Hear me, sullen Ponsonby !
 Thou of the place-hunting eye ;
 Hear me, Stewart, of beaux supreme,
 Thyself thy everlasting theme ;
 Bold defier of the wave,
 (Thine’s a *terra firma* grave !)
 Hear me, simpering Charlemont,
 With thy Machiavellian front,
 With thy Opera lisp and smile,
 Israelite that knows no guile ;
 Compound soft of softest cant,
 Faction’s gentle figurant !

“ Hear me, dotards, one and all —
 Sudden scorn shall on you fall ;
 Laughter follow on your track,
 Laughter drive you flying back ;

Scoffs from people, king, and prince !
Till your ass-skin withers wince,
Not a dinner for your pains,
Not a stiver for your gains ;
Till, though naked, not ashamed,
All your patriot fires are tamed ;
Till your mob-bepelted souls
Wish your senders at the poles,
Curse the hour they first harangued,
And long to see them drowned or hanged."

Then, before their spell-bound view,
Dived the phantom buff and blue :
Laughter from the Cambrian rocks
Mingled with the name of Fox ;
Laughter from the British main
Came with clanks of lash and chain ;
Laughter in the tempest's roar
Rolled from cloud, and sea, and shore.

The consternation of the ministerial deserters in Ireland was boundless, and for once they were not disappointed. They were cashiered in all directions. Office was cleared of every time-server of the tribe ; and the minister was justly said to have " made more patriots in a day than patriotism had ever made in a year." Sheridan's brother Charles, the Irish secretary of war, was among the culprits, and was cast

out like the rest; though his fall was softened by some unaccountable arrangement, which gave him a pension of 1200*l.* a year, with a reversion of 300*l.* to his wife! But if party was excoriated, the nation was rejoiced.

In England, the king's recovery broke up as many dreams of office as were ever kindled between vanity and selfishness. Opposition had cut royal patronage into suits for every shape. Every partisan, and every partisan's partisan, was to be provided for; and the whole loose and pauper mob, who hang on the skirts of politics, were each to find a covering for his multitude of sins. To take the single instance of Sheridan himself; he was to have had the treasurership of the navy; an office totally unfit for his careless habits. But this was not the limit; his brother-in-law, Tickell, an idler, was to have a seat in parliament; and his associate, Richardson, another idler, was to have a commissionership of stamps. Who can regret that the caterpillars were shaken off the public tree; or that the objects of a faction, which thus linked itself with avarice and in-

trigue, were defeated? The man must have been fertile in tears who could grieve that an association for the purposes of plunder should be deprived of the public spoil; or that mercenaries should be stripped of the honours due only to patriotism and virtue. *Scandal, 2d. edit. 1781.*

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRINCE'S MARRIAGE.

THE regency question drove the prince from politics. No experiment could have been more disheartening. Fond of popularity, he saw it crush his last hope ; relying on the wisdom of his friends, he saw their councils ignominiously baffled, their connexion threatened by personal jealousy, and the great antagonist of both prince and party raised into undisputed power ; while, however, attached to his royal father, he found his personal conduct the object of re-proof, and his defence answered only by more open displeasure.

The result was disastrous to himself, to the kingdom, and even to the king. It abandoned the prince to pursuits still more obnoxious than those

of public ambition. It encouraged his natural taste for those indulgences which, however common to wealth and rank, are, in all their shapes, hostile to the practical values and high-minded purposes of life; and it embarrassed his circumstances, until pressed by creditors, and entangled by a multitude of nameless perplexities, he suffered himself to be urged into a marriage, formed without respect or attachment, and endured in bitterness and vexation until its close.

It was said, that at this period a proposal was made to ministers by the prince to accept the viceroyalty of Ireland; a situation for which he would have been fitted, by his attachment to its people, and his general knowledge of its interests. But the proposal, if ever made, was discountenanced. An application was next forwarded to the king for military rank; but the prince still remained a colonel of dragoons, while all his royal relatives were advanced to the highest stations of the service. Chagrin might not unnaturally have seized upon the mind of any man thus in early life stopped in all his efforts for distinction. The state neces-

sity ought to be strong by which the heir of the crown is virtually consigned to either indolence or error.

For some years he abjured all appearance of political feeling. He received the nobility and public persons sumptuously; but with something like a determination to forget on what political side they ranged. He spent the chief part of his time at Brighton; came occasionally to Carlton House; signalized his presence by a ball or a dinner; and then, having done his share as a leader of the fashionable world, galloped back to Brighton, and amused himself with pursuits that cost him less trouble.

Here he was not companionless, though the times had changed in which his table was the scene of the highest discussions of public life. With political hope the leading names of opposition had disappeared, and their places were filled up by individuals chiefly remarkable for their faculties of amusing their royal entertainer. Occasionally, however, guests of a higher rank still appeared; and among those were the late memorable and ill-omened Duke of Orleans.

The Duke of Orleans had visited England

some years before, nominally on a tour of pleasure, but more probably by an order from the French cabinet, which had already suspected him of sowing disaffection in the court. Summoned back to France by an order of the king, after a few months' absence, he had returned, laden with English fashions, and followed by a train of race-horses, English jockeys, and a whole travelling establishment; which he displayed, to the horror of the ancient *régime* of jack-boots and diligences; to the infinite delight of the Parisians, who read liberty in this invasion of Newmarket caps and dock-tailed horses; and to the universal popularity of the *Anglomanie*, which in the Parisian intellect implied English boots, betting, prize-fighting, and the constitution.

In return, the duke had assisted the prince with his knowledge of play; and considerable sums were lost at the Pavilion. From this, a transaction arose, in which, under the various names of a loan, a debt, and a present, the duke was said to have made an offer of a large sum to his royal highness; but the offer was

finally declined, by the advice of Sheridan and the Duke of Portland.

In 1789, the duke visited England for the last time. France was then exhibiting symptoms of disturbance, which made his presence hazardous to the court; and under the pretext of a mission from the king, he was sent out of Paris. But the national assembly were already kings of France, and their passport too was necessary. It was at length granted; with no slight astonishment, that the leading regenerator should leave his country at the moment when she was on the wing, ascending to the third heaven of political perfection. But France had another race of kings, higher than even the national assembly,—the *poissardes* of Boulogne. Those legislators seized the royal envoy, nullified the king's commission on the spot, put the passport in their pockets, and marched him to his hotel, where they placed a guard over him, until they should send a deputation from their own body to the national assembly! The deputation at length returned, bearing the national sanction. The fishwomen expressed themselves

satisfied; the illustrious prisoner was let loose,—fortunate if he had been taught by this example the madness of popular licence,—and was received in London with great distinction by the prince and the chief nobility.

The bewildered career and unhappy fate of the Duke of Orleans are now matter of history. He was born in a hazardous time for a man of weak understanding, strong passions, and libertine principles. All then was trial to the good, or temptation to the evil.—The monarch but a grown child: the queen, estimable but imperious, full of Austrian “right divine,” and openly contemptuous of the people: the court, jealous, feeble, and finding no resource for its weakness but in obsolete artifice and temporary expedient: the nobility, a mass of a hundred and twenty thousand idlers by prescription. A large portion of the priesthood were public despisers of religion and the common obligations by which society is held together; a still larger portion were poor, and living on the mendicant bounty of the people. But beyond those central, projecting points in the aspect of France, those fragments of the old system of the monarchy,

the politician saw a wilderness of living waves, a boundless and sullen expanse of stormy passions, furious aspirations, daring ambition, and popular thirst of slaughter; a deluge, rising hourly round the throne, and soon to overtop its last pinnacle.

Yet the Duke of Orleans was not to see this consummation. He returned to France; was seized by the men of liberty; condemned without a hearing by the votaries of immaculate justice; and murdered on the scaffold by the purifiers of the crimes of lawgivers and kings.

The son of that duke has now peaceably ascended the magnificent throne, which perhaps dazzled the ambition of his father. Whether France will long suffer ^a king, may be doubtful. But, while his claim rests on the national choice, unsullied by the old atrocities of revolution, Europe may well rejoice that France has obtained a man of vigour ; and that man may well rejoice in so illustrious an opportunity of redeeming his name, and spreading the benefits of his wisdom and power to mankind.

A remarkable personage visited England at the same time, the Duc de Lauzun, the finished

representative of the French noblesse of the higher order. Of great elegance of manners, and of striking talents, but utterly prodigal and unprincipled, he was the chevalier whom Grammont would have delighted to draw, if his pencil could have touched the man of fashion with a shade of republicanism. Lauzun remained only a few months in England ; but a Frenchman is a rapid pupil, and in those months he became the most matchless specimen of the *Anglomane*, that had ever captivated the glance of Paris.

Yet, one step more was necessary to perfection, and it was taken. He retired to Passy, a village in the suburbs, and there commenced philosopher. He had succeeded to the title of Biron, and was for awhile the wonder of those pre-eminent sons of science and freedom, who enjoyed his classic banquets, and exulted in the arrival of the golden age, in the prospect of his plunder. But the republic was now mounted on its car, and rushing, with fiery wheels, over the frontiers of rival states, and the necks of potentates and armies. Biron became an avowed republican, was placed at the head of an

army, fought and conquered; was suspected, was seized by the convention, and completed the course of a revolutionary leader, by dying on the scaffold. The axe was the substantial reformer; Biron was no longer to insult the natural equality of man.

He finished his career in the dramatic style of his country, *en héros*. Revolutionary justice suffered no stigma of the “law’s delay;” and the ceremonial seldom consisted of more than the criminal’s pronouncing his name, and the tribunal’s ordering his execution. The scaffold followed the example of the tribunal, and the condemned were generally put to death within the next five minutes. In Biron’s instance, there was the delay of a whole hour; and he used it to exhibit the Epicurean ease which distinguished the wits and sages of the era.

On returning to his dungeon, he ordered oysters and white wine. While he was indulging over this final meal, the executioner entered, to tell him that “the law could wait no longer.” “I beg a thousand pardons, my friend,” said the duke; “but do me the honour to allow me to finish my oysters.” The request

was granted. "But I had forgot," observed Biron; "you will have something to do to-day, and a glass of wine will refresh you: permit me to fill one." The offer was graciously accepted. "Again; I had forgot," added the duke; "there is our mutual friend, the turnkey." The turnkey was called in; three glasses were filled; the three were drunk off—*à la santé*; and in a few minutes after, the head of this gay libertine, traitor, and philosopher was rolling on the scaffold.

The prince's marriage now became the national topic. The Duke of York had already been married some years,* but was childless; and the king, naturally anxious to see a secure succession, and leave his descendants masters of the throne, strongly urged the heir-apparent to select a wife from the royal families of Europe, and thus give a pledge to the empire of that change of habits, and that compliance with the popular wish, which, in those days of change, might be even essential to the public safety.

* October, 1791.

No advice could have been more startling. His royal highness had often declared, that he would not give up “his free, unhoused condition” for any woman on earth: and he had even peculiarly turned into scorn those forms of princely marriages which preclude previous knowledge on both sides.

But the embarrassment extended further than the princely breast. The first announcement of the possibility of his marriage threw the whole female world into confusion. Fashion trembled through all her thrones. If we still have examples of female influence, it is hopeless to conceive the supremacy asserted by women of rank fifty years ago. Even our novelists, with all their eagerness to give pungency to the romance of the great, can find little for public curiosity beyond the common place echo of an elopement, or the childish canvass for the *entrée* of a ball-room. Our journals, the “brief abstracts and chronicles of the time,” represent all women in the higher circles as giving head and heart to the domestic purpose of securing opulent alliances, the matrons for their daughters, and the daughters for themselves.

But the fashion of the last century was of another mould.

London then saw a constellation of female luminaries, any one of which would throw lustre on our modern hemisphere. Each had her peculiar source of homage. The Duchess of Devonshire gave the most sumptuous entertainments, and, by her elegance and accomplishment, sustained a long reign. The Duchess of Gordon, handsome in her youth, had become a *bel-esprit* when she ceased to be a beauty ; and always said the cleverest, and often the keenest of things, with the easiest air of any high-born wit since the days of him

“ Who never said a foolish thing,
Nor ever did a wise one.”

The Duchess of Rutland, who survived till within these few years, and long gave evidence of that beauty which once made her the “ rose of the fair state,” was then, by universal acknowledgment, the loveliest woman of the English court. Thus was completed the celebrated trio, to whom the first homage of every man who aspired to the praise of taste was

paid, and of whom it was said in a popular epigram,—

Come, Paris, leave your hills and dells;
You'll scorn your dowdy goddesses ;
If once you see our English belles,
For all their gowns and bodices.

Here's Juno Devon, all sublime ;
Minerva Gordon's wit and eyes ;
Sweet Rutland, Venus in her prime—
You'll die before you give the prize.

The age of English poetry had perished, and we were to wait long for its revival. But, in the interval, every one wrote verses ; and the essential tribute to a reigning belle was a poetic panegyric upon her attractions. If an English beauty could have been overwhelmed, like Tarpeia, by her ornamental tributes, the women of rank of the last century must have died under a superabundance of verse. Fortunately, nothing is more evanescent : but an ode by Sir Hercules Langrishe, a popular member of the Irish house of commons, a favourite everywhere, and familiar with all that life has of the graceful and the gay, is among the surviving examples of this playful courtesy. The subject

is not of the heroic order,—a gnat's stinging the lady.

TO HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF
RUTLAND.

As poor Anacreon bleeding lies
From the first glance of Stella's eyes,—
Too weak to fly, too proud to yield,
Or leave an undisputed field,—
He rallies, rests upon his arms,
And reconnoitres all her charms.
Vainly he fancies that, by peeping
Through all the beauties in her keeping,
He may, in such a store, collect
The healing balm of *one* defect,—
One feeble point, one faulty spot,
By Nature's forming hand forgot ;
Or left, in mercy, a defence
Against her soft omnipotence,
Which spurns philosopher nor sage,
Nor tender youth nor cautious age.
He viewed her *stature* towering high,
The liquid lustre of her *eye* ;
The rosy beauties of her *mouth*
Diffusing sweetness like the south ;
He viewed her whole array of charms,
Her swan-like neck, her polished arms ;
He looked through every rank and file,
The look, the sigh, the grace, the smile,—
No advantageous pass was lost,
No beauty sleeping on its post ;

But all was order, all was force,—
A look was victory, of course.

At length, an incident arose
That flattered him with lesser woes :
The bold intrusion of a fly
Had closed the lustre of an eye,
And given him hopes that, thus bereft
Of half her splendour, what was left
He might resist, or else evade,
Or cool his passion in the shade.
But, while he thrills beneath her glance,
He sees another foe advance,—
The *snowy arm's* sublime display
Was raised to chase the cloud away.
He felt how frail is hope, how vain :
The vanquished lustre came again ;
The living ivory supplied
The splendour which the eye denied.
So Savoy's snowy hills arise
And pierce the clouds and touch the skies,
And scattering round the silver ray
Give added brightness to the day.

Thus disappointed in his dream
Of imperfection in her frame,
The lover ventures to explore
One final, fond expedient more.
“ Must lovers' eyes be always blind ;
Have I no refuge in her mind ?
Can I no female error trace
To heal the mischiefs of her face ;

One tax, one countervailing duty,
To balance her account of beauty ;
One saving foible, balmy fault,
One impropriety of thought,
To lend its medicinal aid
And cure the wounds her eyes have made ? ”

Presumptuous thought ! I viewed once more
The blaze that dazzled me before,
And saw those very eyes impart
A soul, that sharpened every dart ;
With every rich endowment fraught,
The tender care, the generous thought,
The sense of each exalted duty,
The beauty that was more than beauty ;
The wish, on every smile imprest,
To make *all* happy, and *one* blest !
The whole was softness mixed with love,
The arrow feathered from the dove.

Finding no hope of safe retreat,
I yield contented to my fate ;
I unreluctant drag the chain,
And in the *passion* lose the *pain* ;
Feel her sweet bondage all so light,
Her fetters all so soft and bright,
That, vain and vanquished, I must own
I never wish to lay them down,
Nor longer struggle to be free ;
Such chains are worth all liberty !

The announcement of a stranger, who was to be higher than the highest of those glittering and imperious rulers, produced an universal tumult. But there were others, of inferior rank and more disputable merits, who had deeper reasons for alarm; and public report gave them the discredit of a determined conspiracy against the peace and honour of the future Princess of Wales.

Even in the purer circle of the court, discussions arose which boded ill for her tranquillity. The king, who was much attached to his sister, the Duchess of Brunswick, had selected her daughter, the Princess Caroline Amelia Elizabeth; and, in the first instance, had corresponded with the court of Brunswick on the subject, where the prospect was contemplated with exultation. The queen, not less attached to her own connexions, had proposed her niece, Louisa, Princess of Mecklenburg, afterwards so distinguished and unfortunate as the Queen of Prussia. There was still a third personage to be conciliated, more interested and more reluctant than either—the future husband. But he

had a pressure upon him which no resolution can finally resist: he was overwhelmed with demands upon his income; his creditors were gathering round him again; that querulous and persevering eagerness for royal anecdote which had harassed so many of his earlier years, was again invading his private life with tenfold animosity; and at last, he gave way, and suffered himself to be announced as the suitor of the Princess Caroline. The king immediately sent a formal intimation of his wishes to the court of Brunswick, and the marriage was decided on.

Still, everything in this union seemed destined to be adverse. While the Duke and Duchess of Brunswick were unmeasured in their delight at seeing the succession to the British throne in their family, and themselves the probable ancestors of a race of kings, the princess was said to exhibit no trivial dislike to the match. Among the innumerable rumours which float in the atmosphere of courts on such occasions, it must be difficult to detect the truth; but it was openly asserted, that she had already formed an attachment to an individual in the

ducal service ; and the following letter unfortunately found its way to the public, presumed to be a declaration of her feelings to a German lady residing in England.

“ You are aware of my destiny. I am about to be married to my cousin, the Prince of Wales. I esteem him for his generosity, and his letters bespeak a cultivated mind. My uncle is a good man, and I love him much ; but I feel that I shall never be happy. Estranged from my connexions, friends, and all I hold dear, I am about to make a permanent connexion. I fear for the consequences.

“ Yet I esteem and respect my future husband, and I hope for great kindness and attention. But, alas ! I say sometimes, I cannot now love him with ardour. I am indifferent to my marriage, but not averse to it ; but I fear my joy will not be enthusiastic. I am debarred from possessing the man of my choice, and I resign myself to my destiny. I am attentively studying the English language. I am acquainted with it, but I wish to speak it with fluency. I shall strive to make my husband

happy, and to interest him in my favour, since the fates will have it that I am to be Princess of Wales."

✓ Whether this letter be authentic or not, it is not improbable that it gives a true transcript of this unhappy princess's mind. The prince's perplexities, too, might be less public, yet not less trying; and, by that strange balance which so much equalizes the variety of human condition, there were probably but few in England, even of "the waifs and strays of fortune," who would have had reason to envy the pomps and honours of two beings apparently placed on the golden summit of prosperity.

But the prince's natural good humour soon returned, and he submitted to necessity like a philosopher. The princess's portrait had been sent to him, and he made a point of praising it. On one occasion, he shewed it to an intimate friend, and asked, with some seriousness, "What he thought of it?" The answer was, "That it gave the idea of a very handsome woman." Some observations followed; "However," said the prince, after a pause, "Lennox

and Fitzroy have seen her, and they tell me she is even handsomer than her miniature."

The newspapers, which, of course, collect much detail that naturally soon perishes, gave long accounts of the royal marriage, and are still the best authorities for the public feelings at the time. One of those says:—"The Princess of Brunswick, to whom his royal highness is shortly to give his hand, is twenty-five years of age; her person is very pleasing, and her accomplishments are exquisite. !! *In every thing*

"The first thought of the prince's nuptials originated some time ago with an exalted personage, who had the first interest in seeing the prince established; and it was accordingly hinted to him, but in so delicate a manner as to leave it entirely at his option. Juvenile pursuits at that time suspended all further discourse about it; till one day, his royal highness praising the person and accomplishments of the Princess Mary before the Duke of Clarence, the duke observed, she was very like the Princess of Brunswick, whom he had the honour of knowing and conversing much with.

The prince grew more inquisitive on the subject; and the duke so satisfied him in all particulars as to afford him the highest gratification.

“The affair seemingly dropped for the time; but on the morning of a late grand gala at Windsor, he mentioned it to a great personage, who was delighted with the proposal; it was instantly communicated to the queen, who felt equal satisfaction: it was then agreed to keep the matter entirely out of the cabinet, till it was in some train of forwardness, which was strictly complied with; and the first notice which the ministers of state had of it was, an official notice to prepare for the embassy, the forms, requisitions, &c.

“Presents and marriage favours, to a great amount, are preparing for the princesses, &c., as well as marks of his royal highness's remembrance to several persons of both sexes about the court.

“The Princess of Wales (we may now call her so) is esteemed one of the best harpsichord performers among the royal families on the continent. The prince being passionately fond

of music, *harmony* will, of course, be the order of the day.

“Carlton-house is furnishing for the reception of the royal pair, with all possible magnificence and despatch. An estimate has been made of the whole; and our readers will form some idea of the expensive grandeur of this new establishment, when they are informed, that the Princess of Wales’s dressing-room alone amounts to twenty-five thousand pounds.

“There has been made up, intended as a present from the Prince of Wales to the princess when she arrives, a most magnificent cap, on which is a plume in imitation of his highness’s crest, studded with brilliants, which play backwards and forwards in the same manner as feathers, and have a most beautiful effect. It is now at a banker’s in Pall Mall, carefully locked up.

“The betrothed consort of the Prince of Wales is of middling stature, and remarkably elegant in her person. Her appearance at court is majestic, but accompanied with a sweetness and affability of manners which rivet the admiration of all who behold her. Her

eyes are intelligent, her countenance highly animated, and her teeth white and regular. Her hair, of which she has an amazing quantity, is of a light auburn colour, and appears always dressed in a simple but elegant style. Her taste in every part of dress is equally graceful; so that there is no doubt but she will, on her arrival in this country, be the standard of fashionable dress and elegance."

The king's speech at the opening of the session of 1795 gave the first official knowledge of the intended marriage.

"I have," said his majesty, "the greatest satisfaction in announcing to you the happy event of the conclusion of a treaty of marriage of my son, the Prince of Wales, with the Princess Caroline, daughter of the Duke of Brunswick. The constant proofs of your affection for my person and family persuade me that you will participate in the sentiments I feel on an occasion so dear to my domestic happiness, and that you will enable me to make provision for such an establishment as you may think suitable to the rank and dignity of the heir-apparent to the crown of these kingdoms."

The princess at length left Brunswick, attended by an escort, and the principal persons of the court. Those who were inclined to discover the future in omens, found ill fortune predicted in every point of her journey. It was commenced in the depth of winter; and, within a few days, was stopped by the sudden indisposition of the Duchess of Brunswick, who had intended to accompany her daughter to the shore. The embarkation was to have taken place at Helvoetsluys; but before the princess could reach Osnaburg, it was announced to her that her route must be changed, as the fleet had left the Dutch coast. She then had no resource but to take up her abode in Hanover. At last, on the arrival of the squadron off Cuxhaven, she embarked,* after having spent three months of a German winter on her journey. Even her voyage was a specimen of the inclemency of our climate; and fogs, billows, and gales, were her first salutation to the British shore.

The princess landed at Greenwich.† After a short stay at the house of the governor, Sir

* March 28, 1795.

† April 5.

Hugh Palliser, she proceeded to London, attended by her ladies. The roads were covered with people, who received her with acclamations; and in this species of triumphal entry she passed along, until she reached her apartments at St. James's. The Prince of Wales, always observant of courtesy, waited on her instantly, with all the visible ardour of a lover; complimented her on her arrival, her appearance, and her knowledge of English, and asked permission to dine with her. In the evening the royal family visited her, and the king was animated in his congratulations. The party did not break up till near midnight. It was the English family party which his majesty loved; and his honest and hospitable joy communicated itself to all round him.

Among princes, the hopes and fears of the passions are brief; and his royal highness had but three days for romance; for on the third* from the arrival of the princess he was summoned to St. James's, to be married!

The ceremony had every adjunct of royal

* April 8.

magnificence ; the bride came, covered with jewels, with a diamond coronet on her brow, and attended by four daughters of nobility as bridesmaids, Lady Mary Osborne, Lady Charlotte Spencer, Lady Caroline Villiers, and Lady Charlotte Legge. The prince appeared in the collar of the Garter, and attended by two unmarried dukes, Bedford and Roxburgh. Throughout the whole ceremony the king's gratification was palpable. He peculiarly attended to the bride ; and when the archbishop asked the usual question, "Who giveth this woman to be married to this man ?" his majesty went hastily forward to the princess, and taking her hand in both his, affectionately gave her to her husband.

But another ceremonial of a sterner nature was to come. The prince had acceded to the royal commands, on a promise that his debts should be discharged. The king's natural and becoming wish to see a change in the habits of his heir ; the peculiar importance of rescuing royalty from public imputation at a period when the revolutionary spirit was seeking offence against all thrones ; and the humane necessity

of relieving the multitude of creditors who might be ruined by delay, had predisposed him to the promise. The statement of the debt was laid upon the table of the House of Commons. It was formidable.

Debt on various securities, and bearing	
interest	£500,571 19 1
Tradesmen's bills unpaid	89,745 0 0
Tradesmen's bills and arrears of establish- ment, from 10th of Oct. 1794, to April	
5, 1795.	52,573 5 3

	£642,890 4 4

The chief palliative of this expenditure is, that his royal highness knew but little of its extravagance, and had probably not so much actual enjoyment of it as many an English gentleman with a tenth of his income. He was surrounded by individuals whose interest it was to keep him in the dark relative to his own affairs; in his rank, he could scarcely be expected to inquire very deeply into household details, or to scrutinize tradesmen's bills; and those to whom the duty naturally fell, had keenness enough in pursuit of their own objects to take care that, even if he had scrutinized them, he should have been not less plundered. One instance of this system

of wholesale spoliation may serve as an example of the rest ; his farrier's bill, for horse medicine and shoeing, was £40,000. *£11,000 in total*

The condition on which the prince had yielded to the royal will was now to be performed ; and the proposal for liquidating his debts was ushered in by one of the minister's ablest speeches.* The king had sent a message to the legislature, calling on it to enable him to form an establishment for the newly married pair ; but adding, that the first point was to relieve the prince from his embarrassments, as until then he could derive no advantage from the settlement. The message stated also, that the only mode which the king contemplated of paying the debt was, by deducting a portion of the prince's proposed income, and by handing over the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall for a certain period for the use of the creditors ; finally, a pledge was to be given against all future recurrence of debt.

The measure was necessary ; but no time could have been more unfortunate for the

* April 27, 1795.

demand. The nation was fretted with the failures of the French war, and was doubly irritated at the taxes which every session imposed; angry opinions on government had been eagerly spread through the nation; the imbecility of the Bourbons was made a charge against all sovereigns; the daring doctrines, seconded by the memorable military successes, of the new republic, were already influencing opinion in all countries; and England seemed on the verge of some great and fatal change. The prince's embarrassments now gave an additional topic to the declaimers, and the debates in the house were long and acrimonious. On the motion for the committee on the message, a formidable array of the county members appeared in opposition; and Stanley, member for Lancashire, adverted in strong terms to the former message, in 1787, and the promises then made relative to the prince's obligations. But there was no remedy; and the minister, with whatever reluctance, was compelled to persevere.

The heads of the proposed establishment were—

Annual income of the prince, exclusive of the duchy of Cornwall, to be raised to	£125,000
Jewels and plate for the marriage	28,000
For finishing Carlton House	26,000

The revenue of the duchy was £13,000. The accumulation during the prince's minority, from 1763 to 1783, was £33,764*l.*; and for the liquidation of the debt, a sum of 78,000*l.* a year was to be appropriated. To this proposal were appended clauses providing for the future punctual discharge of the arrears, and for making over Carlton House to the crown, with the furniture, as an heir-loom. A jointure of 50,000*l.* a year was settled on the princess.

The discussion continued nearly three months before the public, and during the whole time the feelings of party within and without the house were in a perpetual ferment. The Duke of Clarence, who had seldom taken a share in the debates, attracted public notice by the generosity and boldness with which he adopted the cause of the innocent sufferer, the Princess of Wales.

“Whatever may be thought,” said he, “of the stipulations for the payment of the debts,

there is at least one individual who ought not to be exposed to this harsh and stern inquisition,—a lovely and amiable woman, torn from her family; for though her mother is his majesty's sister, she must still be said to be torn from her family, by being suddenly separated from all her early connexions. What must her feelings be, from finding her reception in this country followed by such circumstances, when she had a right to expect every thing befitting her rank, and the exalted station to which she was called?"

The princess herself, unused to inquiries into the conduct of courts, was alternately indignant and dejected, declaring, that "she would rather live on bread and water in a cottage, than have the character and conduct of the royal family, and especially of her husband, thus severely investigated." Opposition, disheartened by perpetual defeat, was now almost reduced to Fox and Sheridan; who, however, with more than their usual prudence, pointed out the only way of rational extrication; and with even more than their usual boldness, assailed higher authority than that of ministers. But Sheri-

dan, animated by every motive that could kindle his passions or his genius,—attachment to the prince, vexation at the turn of fortune which had cast him immeasurably beyond the hope of public honours, and the still stronger offence of being charged with sharing the plunder of the prince's income,—eclipsed himself. The house was kept in a state of unwearyed admiration by the variety of powers which this extraordinary man displayed night after night, in the midst of a life of that alternate embarrassment and excess, dreamy indolence and exhausting luxury, that ague of the mind, which most rapidly exhausts and enervates the intellectual frame.

The fragments of those speeches which remain can now only do injury to the reputation of the great orator. Yet, shattered as they are, they exhibit some traces of the master hand.

“I disdain,” said he, “all this trifling and quibbling with the common sense of the nation. Let the people not be deceived by our taking the money out of their pockets as a royal income, and paying it back as a royal debt.

To-night it is not my intention to vote either way. This seems to surprise some gentlemen opposite; but, to those who make up their minds on all questions *before they come into the house!* some surprise may be natural at my not making up my mind after I am in it.

“The debt *must* be paid immediately, for the dignity of the country and the situation of the prince. He must not be seen rolling about the streets as an insolvent prodigal. But the public need not be burdened with the pressure of a hair in affording him that relief.

“In the course of these discussions, gentlemen have applied strong language to the conduct of an illustrious prince. But there are *other high and illustrious* characters, who, in future discussions, must be told as plainly, what the public have a right to expect from them, and what their conduct ought to have been on the present occasion, however ungracious the task may be.”

The plan in Sheridan’s contemplation was, that an advance should be made from the privy purses of the king and queen, and that

the incomes of the sinecure places should be thrown in.

“ The king’s privy purse was 60,000*l.*, the queen’s, 50,000*l.*; and all their houses and paraphernalia were now finished and furnished. The first and most natural feeling of a parent would be, to make some sacrifice to retrieve the imprudence of a son.” He then pounced upon the sinecures:—“ As places which add to neither the dignity of the crown nor its strength. Let a committee of trustees be appointed, in whom might be placed the sinecure revenues after the death of their present holders. Posterity would look back with gratitude to the arrangement, and with wonder that such places ever existed. This would be the way to make our constitution stable, and to prevent the wild system of Jacobinism from undermining or overturning it. While we were spilling our blood and wasting our money in support of continental monarchy, this would be a national resource, and prove that monarchy, or those employed under it, could shew examples of self-denial, and do something for the benefit of the people. This would

add lustre to the crown ; unless, indeed, ministers might think that it shone with lustre in proportion to the gloom that surrounded it, and that *a king is magnificent as his subjects become miserable!*

—“There is one class who love the constitution, but do not love its abuses. There is another who love it with all its abuses. But there is a third, a large and interested party, among whom I do not hesitate to place his majesty’s ministers, who love it for nothing but its abuses ! But let the house, the best part of our constitution, consider its own honour. Let us destroy the sinecures. Let us build the dignity of the prince on the ruins of idleness and corruption, and not on the toils of the industrious poor, who must see their loaf decreased by the discharge of his encumbrances.”

To the charge of sharing in the prince’s expenditure he gave the most distinct denial. “He had never accepted anything, not so much as a present of a horse. He scorned the imputation, and would leave it to defeat itself.” He then repulsed with quick sarcasm the attacks made on him in the course of the debates by the

minor antagonists, who had rashly volunteered this proof of their ministerial devotion. Colonel Fullarton had said, in a long and desultory speech, that the prince's councils were *secretly* guided by Sheridan. After contemptuously retorting the charge,—“*I, the secret councillor of the prince! I have never given his royal highness a syllable of advice in which I did not wish it were possible to have the king standing on one side and the people of England on the other;*” he proceeded to repay the colonel:—

“As to certain portions of the honourable gentleman's speech, some of the sentences, I actually believe, no gentleman in this house understood, nor could understand; and the only solution of the problem is, that somebody must have advised him to prepare a speech against what he conjectured *might* be said to-night. He had rifled the English language to find out proverbs and trite sayings; and had so richly enveloped his meaning in metaphor, and embellished it with such colouring, as to render it totally unintelligible to meaner capacities.”

Rolle had called him to order. He did not

escape. Sheridan told him, "that he was not at all surprised to hear himself called to order by that honourable gentleman; but he should have been very much surprised to hear *any reason* for the call from that honourable gentleman." Even to Pitt, who had, on one occasion, made no other reply to his speech than moving to adjourn, he flung down the glove:—"I make no comment on the indecency of moving to adjourn, when the public relief is the topic. To desire the gentlemen on the opposite side to make provision for the prince by a reduction of useless places, would be to amerce themselves. For my part, I never thought them capable of any folly of the kind."

The prince at length interposed; and by Anstruther, his solicitor-general, sent a message to the house, declaring "his acquiescence in any arrangements which it might deem proper with respect to his income and its appropriation to the payment of his debts. He was perfectly disposed to make any abatement in his personal establishment that was considered necessary." The princess coincided in the message; and

the proceedings were closed by three bills,*— The 1st, For preventing future Princes of Wales from incurring debts. The 2nd, For granting an establishment to the prince. And the 3rd, For the princess's jointure. Commissioners were next appointed for the examination of the debts. The creditors were paid by debentures, with interest on their claims; and the term of nine years was fixed for the final payment. Many of the claims were rejected as groundless, many were largely reduced as exorbitant, and a per centage was taken off the whole. Thus ended a proceeding in which the minister was burthened with the impossible task of satisfying the nation, the creditors, and the prince. Pitt exhibited every high quality of his station; and if he failed, it was only where no man living could have succeeded.

* June 24, 1795.

CHAPTER X.

THE ROYAL SEPARATION.

DURING the period of the prince's retirement, before and after his marriage, several incidents occurred, which brought him, from time to time, into the presence of the public. Some of them exhibited that want of caution which was the source of his chief vexations throughout life; but all bore the redeeming character of his original goodnature.

Prize fighting had become a popular, and even a fashionable amusement, by the patronage of some of the nobility. Brutal as the habit is, and inevitably tending to barbarise a people, it was for awhile considered a peculiar feature of British manliness. The prince adopted this patriotic exhibition, and

was honoured accordingly; but, one display, at which a wretched man was beaten to death before his face, gave him so effectual a lesson of championship, that, with honest indignation, he declared, “he would never be present at such a scene of murder again.”

The Lennox duel not less exhibited his good feeling. The offence received by the irritable colonel seemed to have been of the most trivial nature. The attempt on the life of the son of his king, and one who might himself yet be his king, was a public crime; and if Colonel Lennox had killed the Duke of York, nothing but the mercy of that duke’s grieved parent could have saved him from an ignominious death. But the result was fortunately bloodless; and the king appeared to think it a matter of etiquette to overlook the crime. But the Prince of Wales was unable to restrain his feelings; and on the first meeting with Colonel Lennox at court, he expressed his displeasure in the most pointed manner consistent with the presence of royalty.*

* The story was thus told in the newspapers:—Col. Lennox, to the surprise of every one, had appeared at the ball given at

The transaction with Jefferys, the well-known jeweller, was one of those instances which made the prince's connexion with Mrs. Fitzherbert so perpetual a source of disaster. Nothing could be more trifling than the transaction itself—a loan of 1600*l.*, which was repaid at the promised time; but the circumstances under which it was borrowed at once

St. James's on the king's birth-day, (1789.) “The colonel stood up in the country dance with Lady Catherine Barnard. The prince, who danced with his sister, the princess royal, was so far down the set that the colonel and Lady Catherine were the next couple. The prince paused, looked at the colonel, took his partner's hand, and led her to the bottom of the dance. The Duke of Clarence followed his example; but the Duke of York made no distinction between the colonel and the other gentlemen of the party. When the colonel and his partner had danced down the set, the prince again took his sister's hand and led her to a seat. Observing this, the queen approached the prince, and said, ‘You are heated, sir, and tired. I had better leave the apartment and put an end to the dance.’ ‘I am heated,’ replied the prince, ‘and tired, not with dancing, but with a portion of the company;’ and emphatically added, ‘I certainly never will countenance an insult offered to my family, however it may be regarded by others.’ The prince's natural gallantry next day offered the necessary apology to Lady Catherine Barnard, ‘regretted that he should have caused *her* a moment's embarrassment.’”

gave great pain to the prince, and supplied a topic of peculiar calumny to his enemies.

Jefferys was obviously a person unfit for the royal confidence. The prince had thanked him, in his good-natured language, for the service : and the jeweller's vanity was instantly inflamed into the most extravagant expectations of patronage. The prince was as destitute of power as any gentleman in the kingdom ; but he gave him all that he could give, the order for the marriage jewels, which amounted to 64,000*l.* Jefferys had, in the meantime, followed his fortunes in other ways ; he had become a member of parliament, Coventry having the honour to return him ; and he had at length thrown up trade, and become a solicitor for place. The commissioners for the payment of the prince's debts attempted to deduct ten per cent. from his bill for the jewels. This he resisted, and, by the help of Erskine, obtained a verdict in Westminster Hall for the full amount ; which, however, he complained was but partly paid. Thus he continued for years, pamphleteering his wrongs, appealing to the prince for compensation which he had no power to give, and forcing the

royal name before the public in the most perplexing and unfortunate manner.*

The royal marriage was inauspicious; and it was soon rumoured, that the disagreements of habit and temper, on both sides, were too strong to give any hope of their being reconciled. Of an alliance contracted with predilections for others existing in the minds of both parties, the disunion was easily foreseen; a partial separation took place, and the tongue of scandal availed itself fully of all its opportunities.

* The prince's sale of his stud and retirement from Newmarket was a public topic for some time. This whole affair also is almost too trifling for record.—A horse belonging to his stud ran ill on one day, when heavy bets had been laid upon his winning; but ran well on the next day, when heavy bets had been laid on his losing. Chifney, the jockey, was immediately assailed by the losers on both occasions as having plundered them; but he made an affidavit that he had won only 20*l.* The Jockey Club sat in judgment on the case, and disbelieving the jockey, ordered that he should ride there no more. The prince believing him, looked on the decision as an injustice to his servant, and an offence to himself: he instantly withdrew from the course; and feeling for the poverty to which Chifney must be reduced, gave him a yearly allowance. The charge was soon, and totally, abandoned.

On the 7th of January, 1796, the Princess Charlotte was born. The usual officers of state were in attendance, and the prince was in the state chamber, awaiting the event with great anxiety. The royal infant was christened on the 11th of February, at St. James's, receiving the names of Charlotte from the queen, and of Augusta from the Duchess of Brunswick ; the sponsors were their majesties, with the princess-royal as proxy for the duchess.

A considerable number of addresses from public bodies were presented on this fortunate occasion. But the corporation of London contrived to take offence at his royal highness's expressing that, from the reduction of his establishment, he must be content with receiving a copy of their address, instead of the deputation.

Birch, one of the common council, moved, upon this, "That the court could not, consistently with its dignity, suffer the compliment to be paid otherwise than in the usual form." The prince sent for the lord mayor, and stated, in apology, his reasons for the refusal. The city was considered to have pushed punctilio as far

as it could go: for the congratulations of the two houses of parliament had been already presented in private, on the same ground, the state of the prince's household.

During the dissensions of Carlton-house, the king paid the most marked civilities to the Princess of Wales, visited her frequently, made her presents, wrote letters to her, and on all occasions evinced his determination to protect her under the difficulties of her circumstances.

But, unfortunately, she was totally deficient in prudence. In defiance of all warnings, she still spoke with open scorn of all whom she suspected of conspiring against her; and there were few whom she did not suspect. Her opinions even of the royal family were highly sarcastic, and she had the rashness to put those opinions on paper in her correspondence with the court of Brunswick.

At length, a whole packet of those angry communications was unaccounted for. They had been intrusted to a Dr. Randolph, a clergyman, who was going to Germany; and they never reached their intended destination. But it was equally clear that they had reached

another; and the princess publicly declared that they had been intercepted for the purpose of being scattered among the royal family. Dr. Randolph was, of course, implicated in the charge; but the Doctor stated that, having changed his mind as to his German journey, he had returned the letters to the princess by the usual Brighton conveyance. The inquiry was hotly urged by the public, with the strongest expressions against the parties; until Lady Jersey came forward to vindicate herself, at the Doctor's expense, by the following letter:—

“ *Pall Mall.*

“ SIR,—The newspapers being full of accusations of my having opened a letter either to or from her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, and as I cannot in any way account for what can have given rise to such a story, excepting the loss of those letters with which you were intrusted last summer, I must entreat that you will state the whole transaction, and publish the account in the newspapers you may think fit. Her royal highness having told me, at the time when my inquiries at Brighton, and

yours in London, proved ineffectual, that she did not care about the letters, they being only letters of form, the whole business made so little impression on me, that I do not even recollect in what month I had the pleasure of seeing you at Brighton. I think you will agree with me, that defending myself from the charge of opening a letter is pretty much the same thing as if I were to prove that I had not picked a pocket; yet, in this case, I believe it may be of some use to shew upon what grounds so extraordinary a calumny is founded. As I cannot wish to leave any mystery upon this affair, you are at liberty to publish this letter if you think proper to do so."

Lord Jersey next came forward in the correspondence with the harassed doctor:—

“ SIR,—Lady Jersey wrote to you early in the last week, requesting that a full statement from you of all that passed relating to the packet of letters belonging to her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales might appear in public print. To that letter she has received no answer from

you, nor have I learned that any such publication has appeared. The delay I have been willing to attribute to accident; but it now becomes *my duty* to call upon you, and I do require it of you, that an explicit narrative may be laid before the public: it is a justice she is entitled to, a justice *Lady Jersey's character* claims, and which she has, and which you have acknowledged she has, a right to demand at your hands. Your silence upon this occasion I shall consider as countenancing that calumny which the false representations of the business have so shamefully and unjustly drawn upon Lady Jersey. I am, &c."

Dr. Randolph finally came before the general tribunal as a contributor to this singular exhibition; and discussed the matter, in a letter to her ladyship, in full form:—

"MADAM,

* * * * *

"I need not recall to your ladyship's recollection the interview I had with the princess at Brighton: when she delivered to me the packet

in question, all her attendants in waiting were, I believe, present, and the conversation generally turned upon the various branches of her august family, and the alteration I should find in them after an absence of ten years. This interview, if I am not mistaken, took place on the 13th of August; and after waiting, by her royal highness's desire, till the 14th, when the prince was expected from Windsor, to know if he had any commands to honour me with, I had no sooner received from Mr. Churchill his royal highness's answer, than I departed for London, with the intention of proceeding to Yarmouth.

“ On my arrival in town, finding some very unpleasant accounts of the state of Mrs. R.'s health, I took the liberty of signifying the occurrence to her royal highness, annexing to it, at the same time, a wish to defer my journey for the present, and that her royal highness would permit me to return the packet, or allow me to consign it to the care of a friend who was going into Germany, and would see it safely delivered. To this I received, through your ladyship, a most gracious message from her royal highness,

requesting me by all means to lay aside my intentions, and return the packet. In consequence of such orders, I immediately went to Carlton House, to inform myself by what conveyance the letters and parcels were usually sent to Brighton, and was told that no servant was employed, but that every day they were, together with the newspapers, committed to the charge of the Brighton post coach from the Golden Cross, Charing Cross. On the subsequent morning, therefore, I attended at the Golden Cross, previous to the departure of the coach, and having first seen it regularly booked, delivered my parcel, enclosing the princess's packet, addressed to your ladyship at the Pavilion. Immediately afterwards I set out for Bath, and had scarcely been a fortnight at home, when, to my surprise and mortification, I received the following letter from your ladyship, dated Brighton, Sept. 1:—

“ ‘ SIR,—In consequence of your letter, I have had her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales’s commands to desire, that as you did not go to Brunswick, you should return the

packet which she had given you. I wrote accordingly, about a fortnight ago. Her royal highness not having received the packet, is uneasy about it, and desires you to inform me how you sent the letters to her, and where they were directed. If left at Carlton House, pray call there, and make some inquiries respecting them.'

"To which letter of your ladyship I then returned the following answer:—

" 'MADAM,—I know not when I have been more seriously concerned than at the receipt of your ladyship's letter, which was forwarded to me this morning. The morning I left town, which was on the 20th of August, I went to the Brighton post coach, which I was told at Carlton House was the usual conveyance of the princess's papers and packets, and booked a parcel, addressed to your ladyship at the Pavilion, enclosing the letters of her royal highness. I have sent to a friend in London by this night's post, to trace the business; and will request your ladyship to let your servants call at the

Ship, the inn, I believe, the coach drives to at Brighton, to make inquiry there, and to examine the bill of parcels for Thursday, the 20th August. If this prove not successful, I shall hold it my duty to return to town, and pursue the discovery myself. I shall not be easy till the packet is delivered safe; and trusting that this will soon be the case, I remain, &c.'"

Public animadversion was inflicted with equal zeal on all the individuals concerned in this luckless affair. The Doctor especially was asked—How he could have treated the trust of a person of the distinction, and under the peculiar circumstances, of the princess with such apparent *nonchalance*? Why, at the easy distance of London from Brighton, he had not thought proper to restore the letters to her own hands? Why he had lingered so long in offering his explanation, when the first and most natural impulse of any man publicly lying under so stinging a charge would have been, to cast it from him without a moment's delay, and never desist until his vindication was complete, and the charge was substantiated against the

true criminals? Finally, it was demanded, why the people of the coach-office were not brought forward to shew what had actually become of the packet, and into whose hands at Brighton it had been delivered?

But here discovery closed; the only clear fact being, that the letters never returned to the writer. Her royal highness could scarcely be supposed to preserve silence on a subject which, however innocent, had so much the air of intrigue. Her indignation was unbounded; she unhesitatingly declared that, from circumstances, and even phrases, which elapsed in conversation, her correspondence must have been put into the hands of her enemies.

The king, with that kindness which formed so large a portion of his character, made one attempt more to put an end to those painful disputes: but the highest life is, in essentials, like the lowest; and the hazard of interfering in matrimonial differences, even though the mediator were a king, was palpably shewn in the still wider alienation of the parties. After a short period, a separation was proposed by the prince, and the princess expressed her readi-

ness to accede to the measure, with only the added condition, that the separation should be *perpetual*. To this his royal highness finally agreed, in the following note :—

“ **MADAM**,—As Lord Cholmondeley informs me that you wish I should define, in writing, the terms upon which we are to live, I shall endeavour to explain myself upon that head with as much clearness and with as much propriety as the nature of the subject will admit. Our inclinations are not in our power; nor should either of us be held answerable to the other, because nature has not made us suitable to each other. Tranquil and comfortable society is, however, in our power; let our intercourse, therefore, be restricted to that, and I will distinctly subscribe to the condition which you required, through Lady Cholmondeley, that even in the event of any accident happening to my daughter, which I trust Providence in its mercy will avert, I shall not infringe the terms of the restriction by proposing, at any period, a connexion of a more particular nature. I shall now finally close this disagreeable corre-

spondence, trusting that, as we have completely explained ourselves to each other, the rest of our lives will be passed in undisturbed tranquillity.

“ I am, Madam, with great truth,

“ Very sincerely yours,

“ GEORGE P.”

“ *Windsor Castle, April 30, 1796.*”

To this communication the princess, after some interval, replied:—

“ SIR,—The avowal of your conversation with Lord Cholmondeley neither surprises nor offends me; it merely confirmed what you have tacitly insinuated for this twelvemonth. But after this, it would be a want of delicacy, or rather an unworthy meanness in me, were I to complain of those conditions which you impose upon yourself. I should have returned no answer to your letter, if it had not been conceived in terms to make it doubtful whether this arrangement proceeds from you or from me. You are aware that the honour of it be-

longs to you alone. The letter which you announce to me as the last obliges me to communicate to the king, as to my sovereign and my father, both your avowal and my answer. You will find enclosed a copy of my letter to the king. I apprise you of it, that I may not incur the slightest reproach of duplicity from you. As I have at this moment no protector but his majesty, I refer myself solely to him on this subject; and if my conduct meet his approbation, I shall be, in some degree at least, consoled. I retain every sentiment of gratitude for the situation in which I find myself, as Princess of Wales, enabled by your means to indulge in the free exercise of a virtue dear to my heart—charity. It will be my duty, likewise, to act upon another motive—that of giving an example of patience and resignation under every trial.

“ Do me the justice to believe, that I shall never cease to pray for your happiness, and to be, your much devoted

“ CAROLINE.”

“ *May 6, 1796.*”

The king still interposed his good intentions, and desired that the princess should, at least, reside under the same roof with her husband. She had apartments in Carlton House, while the prince spent his time chiefly at Brighton. But Charlton, a village near Blackheath, was finally fixed on for her residence ; and there, with the Princess Charlotte, and some ladies in attendance, she lived for several years.

In this whole transaction the prince was clearly culpable. With habits of life totally opposite to those of domestic happiness, he had married for convenience ; and, the bond once contracted, he had broken it for caprice. Following the fatal example of those by whom he was only, and always, betrayed, he had disregarded the obligations fixed upon him by one of the most important and sacred rites of society ; and, without any of those attempts “to bear and forbear,” to endure the frailties of temper as well as the chances of fortune, which he had vowed at the altar, he cast away his duties as a toy of which he was tired ; thus ultimately rendering himself guilty of every possible error

of the unhappy woman whom he had abandoned.

After a seclusion of ten years, the princess came again before the world. In 1804, her royal husband had insisted on the necessity of withdrawing the Princess Charlotte from her superintendence; but the king was prompt in exhibiting his protection, and, after some correspondence, he took the guardianship upon himself.

But the rumours which had produced this discussion, at length assumed shape in more formidable charges, which the prince, by the advice of Lord Thurlow, embodied and laid before his majesty. A committee,* consisting of Lords Erskine, Grenville, Spencer, and Ellenborough, examined the papers, which accused the princess of a guilty intercourse with the late Sir Thomas Lawrence, Captain Manby, Sir Sidney Smith, and others.

The report of the committee fully exonerated her royal highness of crime; simply objecting

* May 29, 1806.

“carelessness of appearances,” and “levity” in the instance of certain individuals. The king upon this declared her conduct clear, and ordered a prosecution for perjury to be instituted against Lady Douglas, the wife of an officer of marines, and her principal accuser. Lady Douglas was covered with obloquy; and her husband, who appears to have been passive on the occasion, was so deeply affected by the public scorn, that he was said to have died of a broken heart.

His majesty carried on the triumphant vindication to the last; gave the princess apartments in Kensington palace, and, as a decisive expression of his own sentiments, directed that she should be received at court with peculiar attention. She appeared at the next birth-day; and so strong was the national feeling, even in those ranks where it is etiquette to suppress emotion, that as her royal highness passed through the crowd, she was received with an universal clapping of hands.

Fortunate for her, if that day had taught her the wisdom of confiding herself and her cause to

a generous people; doubly fortunate for her, if she had for ever shunned the contamination of that foreign residence and those foreign manners which are so often alike pestilent to the honour of man and the virtue of woman.

END OF VOL. I.

T. C. Savill, Printer, 107, St. Martin's Lane.

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